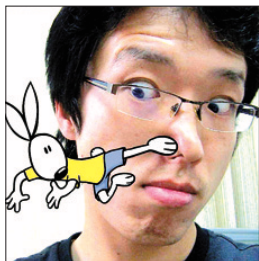


Give something
unforgettable

Page 16



北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Bunny battles his creator

Page 15



Old factory's renaissance

Pages 20-21

Designed in China



Eleven top designers and design groups from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan are showing their works at Today Art Museum. The exhibition is the first of its kind to bring together China's best of the best.

In many ways, the country is a giant lab where designers can experiment to their hearts' content. But it may be too soon to expect a flood of "Designed in China" products, even though domestic designers are creeping steadily onto the list of the world's best.

Read more on Pages 12-13.

Fishy figures in corporate social report

Page 6

First English library opens in Tongzhou

Page 9



Time honors the Chinese worker

Page 4



What can a portrait reveal?

Page 8

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HOT POT!

CHINESE RESTAURANT

New report finds Internet a force of justice

By Zhao Hongyi

Media used to be the watchdog of the government and defender of society. But today, that role is being assumed by the Internet.

The Web now breaks more stories of abuse and mistreatment than anywhere else, according to the "Blue Paper on Social Affairs" published Monday by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the central government's think tank.

Research concluded that 30 percent of the most serious social abuses broke online. Most of these went on to become top news stories in traditional media and to find legal defense.

As the Internet further integrates with mobile devices, it is becoming a powerful medium for change. Netizens are using words, photos and videos – usually under the veil of anonymity – to expose the misdeeds around them.

As of June 30, 26 percent of the

population regularly visited cyberspace. Twenty-three of the year's 77 worst social issues broke online, the paper said.

The paper named a number of shameful issues, including the case of Deng Yujiao, a hotel worker in Badong county, Hubei Province, who killed a county official who attempted to force her to engage in sex for money. The court found Deng not guilty of murder.

The ongoing battle against Chongqing's underworld also broke online. And "more importantly, inside news were also first exposed online," according to the paper.

Netizens have also been responsible for the spread of news-inspired memes into the everyday vernacular: phrases like "duo maomao," taken from the story of a Yunnan inmate killed by correctional officers and whose death was blamed on a game of hide-and-seek gone horribly wrong.

"It's a nice way for people to vent

their frustrations and to discuss major issues that are too sensitive for traditional media," Zhu Huaxin, an analyst at the *People's Daily*, said. "It's also critically important in exposing problems so that the government and legal bodies can improve the system."

This year, micro-blogs via mobile phone was the latest trend. Users post short updates and photos from their phones. "It has installed supervising eyes at the grassroots level to prevent corrupt officials and uniformed hooligans from brutalizing the public," Hu Jiangchun, a media analyst, said.

The paper said most reports deal with three problems: the uneven distribution of wealth, economic insecurity and the competition of special interests with the common good.

The central government has ordered all government bodies to assign pokespeople to respond to appeals for help and justice over



Residents take to the streets to fight a government decision to seize their homes and give them to a real estate mogul in Changsha, Hunan Province.

CFP Photo

the Internet. However, it cautioned that online whistleblowers must be reliable and objective, or they could face libel charges.

Analysts called on local officials to stop deleting the words and photos of whistleblowers and jailing them without due process.

Karaoke bars penalized for carrying gov-approved, 'indecent' songs



Fines may make Karaoke a "dangerous" activity.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Chongqing's netizens are furious about a new local policy intended to crack down on the "indecent songs and pornographic videos" that are allegedly popular in the municipality's karaoke bars.

Some have accused the local officials in charge of the ordinance of passing it purely for their own commercial benefit.

The new regulation requires that all songs with "indecent lyrics, unhealthy tunes and sexy videos" be banned in all karaoke parlors. This would include songs whose lyrics riff on political figures or "insult the dignity of other nations."

Around 176 of the parlors are outfitted with nationally approved karaoke songs databases, which operators say is "safe and legal," the *Chongqing Evening News* reported.

But the municipal government is now installing filtering software on top of that that would issue a warning whenever a client orders a song it deems prohibited. The software would alert the government to investigate the parlor and fine

them for carrying the song.

Netizens have asked why the government does not simply revise the database to remove indecent songs rather than keep the list a mystery and issuing fines when they are ordered. As the current database was approved by the central government in Beijing, some have said it is curious that Chongqing has the power to declare nationally-approved songs as "indecent."

"A night of karaoke might become a very dangerous thing," a netizen posting under the handle East Wind complained.

But Chongqing's karaoke clubs seem unshaken. "We'll follow the rules and install the software," a karaoke operator in Liberation Monument, the municipality's business district, said.

The Chongqing Municipal Cultural Market Supervising Team, a government watchdog, said it had not heard about the policy and said the government would not fine parlors or clients. But the Chongqing Municipal Cultural and Broadcasting Bureau said the policy is part of

a new national movement to weed out other illegal activities that frequently occur at karaoke parlors.

A deputy director of the supervising team, surnamed Huang, echoed netizen complaints and said filtering software is not the answer.

"If the songs are illegal, why aren't they stricken from the database at the national level?" Huang said.

"Even if the songs end up being illegal, it would be the parlors who get the fine – not the patrons," Huang said.

An official from the bureau who would only state his family name, Ho, said the order to install filtering software came from his bureau. He refused to say more, stating that the bureau is in the middle of a restructuring.

Karaoke parlors are popular with youngsters and businesspeople. But many parlors are infamous for being a front-end to drug trafficking and prostitution. That seedy reputation has brought the entire industry under increasing government scrutiny.

Committee mulls new law to save vanishing islands

By Han Manman

A new draft law before the State Committee clarified all uninhabited islands as being state-owned and forbids individuals, businesses and local governments from using or leasing the islands.

The draft law on sea island protection, now up for its third review, is intended to stem the ecological abuse of uninhabited islands, which has been rampant in recent years.

According to the third draft, construction projects and tourist activities that are contradictory to ecological conservation will be banned. All vegetation and indigenous species will be strictly protected.

Violators will be ordered to demolish illegal buildings and may face fines as high as 200,000 yuan, the current revision says.

The draft law, the first of its kind, was submitted to the ninth session of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) for its first reading in June. It proposes that national and local governments make plans to guide the protection and development of inhabited and uninhabited islands.

Wang Guangtao, chairman of the NPC's Environment and Resources Protection Committee, said the law is urgently needed and that many uninhabited islands have already been seriously damaged by unregu-

lated human activities.

He said consolidating the uninhabited islands as State-owned territory would avoid disasters like those in Shandong and Zhejiang provinces, where some islands were sold by local authorities to tourism companies and miners.

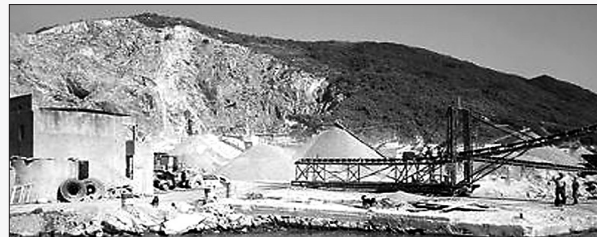
The country has 6,500 islands larger than 500 square meters scattered throughout its maritime waters, including 433 inhabited islands: nearly 94 percent of the islands are uninhabited islands according to government statistics.

Some illegal developers also have been dynamiting open hills and dumping waste on the islands, said Wang Xiaobo, an expert at the Second Institute of Oceanography State Oceanic Administration. "Some firms' random dumping of garbage and toxins have turn the islands into landfills. But even worse, the explosions of unregulated strip mining have severely marred their appearance."

Some islands have already vanished due to overexploitation and mining blasts.

Since the 1990s, 242 islands have vanished from the waters off the coastal provinces of Liaoning, Hebei, Fujian, and Hainan, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Wang said the law may help safeguard remaining islands, though he wondered whether or not it would be strictly enforced.



Businesses are destroying uninhabited islands with their illegal exploitation.

Photo provided by The Legal Daily



Akmal Shaikh
Photo provided by Global Times

British national up for execution

By Venus Lee

London's last-minute appeal to spare a British man scheduled for execution next week fell on deaf ears.

Akmal Shaikh, a former minicab boss from Kentish Town, north of London, is on death row for entering the country carrying 4 kilograms of heroin in his suitcase.

Shaikh was arrested in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, in September 2007 after arriving on a flight from Kyrgyzstan.

The Supreme Court rejected an appeal for clemency by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and has scheduled his execution for December 29, the Associated Press reported.

While Shaikh's final appeal to overturn his drug smuggling conviction was rejected, the government said it has not released an execution date, and the man's lawyers said they were unaware of the date reported by AP.

The execution comes amid already strained London-Beijing ties. The relationship was battered earlier this month at the United Nations' climate change summit in Copenhagen, where British minister Ed Miliband accused the country of "hijacking" the negotiations.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said Shaikh was given a fair trial.

"The case has been handled fairly according to Chinese law. Drug smuggling is a grave crime internationally," Jiang said. "The accused [sic] freely exercised his right to defense during the trial, and his legal rights and interests were respected and guaranteed. China offered prompt information to the UK and arranged consular visits," she said.

Shaikh will be the first person from Europe to be executed in China in 50 years if the sentence is carried out, Reprieve, a UK-based human rights advocate and anti-death penalty group, said.



Shaikh faces the death penalty for smuggling 4 kilograms of heroin into Xinjing.

Xinhua Photo

The 53-year-old Shaikh was sentenced to death at his first trial in the Intermediate People's Court of Urumqi on October 29, 2008. Shaikh told police he came to China to be a pop star and that he had been given the suitcase by a man who said he could make him famous and who would follow on the next flight.

Last May, Shaikh's appeal to the Higher People's Court of Xinjiang was rejected. British lawyers and diplomats appealed for the sentence to be commuted, but the court dismissed the appeal.

Reprieve said Shaikh suffers from bipolar disorder, a mental condition characterized by episodes of mania and depression. Britain's Foreign Office was quoted by the BBC on Monday as saying it "deeply regrets" that mental health concerns have no bearing on the final judgment in turning down Shaikh's appeal.

Chinese law mandates the death penalty for anyone found guilty of transporting more than 50 grams of heroin within the country.

"Under Article 347 of China's Criminal Law, the threshold for a death sentence due to trafficking heroin is 50 grams. Shaikh brought with him 80 times that quantity," Yin Jianping, a lawyer from Tiandihe Lawyer office, said.

Under Chinese Criminal Law, a mental patient can have his criminal responsibility waived only when he is found to have been unable to control himself at the time of the crime.

"Someone whose mental illness is of an intermittent nature will bear criminal

responsibility if the crime was committed when he or she was in a normal mental state," the lawyer said.

According to a judicial insider who refused to be named, Shaikh refused forensic psychiatry, claiming he was mentally well. "He appeared articulate when he spoke to the lawyer and the court, and the accounts on different occasions were consistent," he said.

Prime Minister Brown pressed Premier Wen Jiabao for clemency in a telephone call earlier this month, AFP reported Tuesday.

"It is unreasonable and useless for any foreign country to mess with China's right to carry out its own laws," said Yang Mian, a professor of political science and law at the Communication University of China. "Everyone is equal."

He supported the government in its refusal to bend to political pressure.

Many foreigners are held for crimes including robbery, fraud, trafficking in women and illegal immigration.

A Myanmar national was executed in 2004 in Kunming. A Japanese national was executed in 2007 for carrying 1.25 kilograms of crystal meth despite lobbying by the Japanese embassy.

The government, often criticized overseas for its liberal use of the death penalty, has been taking steps to reduce its number of executions.

China's Supreme People's Court (SPC) claimed a right to death penalty review in January 2007 to give convicts a better chance of reprieve.

Official executions statistics are not made public.

Gov's gay bar sneaks open

By Han Manman

There was no ribbon cutting and no celebration when the first government-backed gay bar opened last weekend.

The fanfare-free opening came three weeks late, largely due to unwanted press coverage that reminded all just how touche a subject homosexuality is in China.

The bar, intended to be a relaxed meeting space for gays and an information hub for HIV/AIDS prevention, drew 60 clients on its first day in the tourist town of Dali, Yunnan Province.

The World AIDS Day opening was delayed when volunteers and potential customers met with discrimination from hardline conservatives incensed by the government's backing of a gay bar, said Zhang Jianbo, founder of the Dali HIV/AIDS prevention and health association, the organization behind the initiative.

"The initial attention is fading, so we decided to open the bar now," Zhang said. Most of the first 60 customers were homosexuals. He said the first day's attendance exceeded expectations and made him optimistic about the bar's future.

"We didn't want any publicity on opening night. We didn't even publicize it on websites for gays. Everything was word of mouth so we could avoid the earlier drama," Zhang said.

Ten of the volunteers performed a play which included HIV prevention messages.

Visitors were also given a free condom.

"The bar is not gay exclusive – anyone can come in for a drink. I think the public would be more tolerant of homosexuals if they could learn to understand them better by visiting the bar," Zhang said.

Funded by the city's health department and two nongovernmental organizations, the nonprofit bar sells soft drinks and beer cheaper than competing local bars.

"The price is just what it costs to run the bar," he said.

Statistics from the Ministry of Health show that Yunnan is home to nearly a quarter of the country's 40,000 reported HIV and AIDS cases, and Dali is one of the worst-hit cities.

Experts estimate that Yunnan has 850,000 gays, 6,000 of whom are open about their sexual orientation. The country's gay population is estimated at 30 million, but the real number could be much higher as many homosexuals remain in the closet, the China News Service reported.

Attitudes to homosexuality, considered a mental illness until 2001, are improving. The country has many gay bars and nightclubs which operate without interference from the authorities.

However, gay men and women still face social taboos, especially as the one-child policy has led many parents to pressure their only child to marry and have grandchildren.

By Huang Daohen

A diligent, hard-working and brave worker can do nothing to stem a financial crisis.

But it is a different story when there are millions of them working together.

And in recognition of these millions who kept the world from sliding into economic disaster, *Time* magazine has selected the Chinese worker as the runner-up to Ben Bernanke in its Person of the Year 2009 list.

As valued as the Chinese workers may seem, the latest crop still faces the same problems: unpaid wages, unsafe work conditions and absent social protections. Social status befitting their role as a savior, it seems, is a long way off.

It is about time

Migrant workers' lives built on a shaky foundation



Setting out for work is a struggle for new migrant workers.

CFP Photos

Making a fortune

Xiao Hongxia started to turn down interview requests after she and her co-workers were asked to represent the Chinese workers for *Time*, but fellow migrant worker Pi Chuangtie was happy to take questions from the media.

"It's the migrant workers that *Time* is referring to, because China has more migrant than urban workers, and they constitute the main industrial workforce," said Pi, 27, from a village in Anhui Province, home to a large population of migrant workers.

Pi now works in a shoe factory in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. Having worked in the city for eight years, he has become fluent in standard Chinese and earns 2,500 yuan a month.

"Farming in my hometown is unreliable these days because of floods and droughts," Pi said, "Even if there is a bumper crop, we cannot be optimistic because grain prices frequently drop while fertilizer and pesticide costs remain stable."

In 2001, Pi decided to leave home for provincial cities in the Yangtze and Pearl River Delta with his fellow villagers.

But life was not easy on Wenzhou's construction sites. "At that time, the most important thing for me was earning money," he said. His salary for the first month was 500 yuan.

After spending two years on the construction site, Pi tried to find a better job and turned to a local shoe factory. He got a labor contract and a fixed salary and doubled his wages. He said he is much



Migrant workers make the economic miracle possible.

"I wanted to learn more while I'm still young; earning money wasn't why I moved."

— Pi Chuangtie

better off now, and is looking into buying an apartment.

"I want to buy a big apartment with three bedrooms so my parents can live with us," he said.

A new generation

Pi wears a factory uniform on workdays. But in his free time he pulls on a pair of designer jeans and grooves to music from his cell phone.

The last generation focused on survival: Pi is part of the new wave.

More and more young migrant workers are choosing a way of life that is contrary to their parents', Song Ze, a researcher with the China Academy of Social Sci-

ences, said.

Young migrant workers are prone to quitting farming. They depend less on the land and the trend is towards permanent migration to the cities, especially second-tier cities, Song said.

Workers used to rush to Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, lured by the promise of high pay and city life. But the sharp contrast between reality and their dreams was crushing, he said.

They hoped to merge into the general population, but instead fell victim to hate and discrimination. Song's survey found that migrant workers overwhelmingly have been happier in second-tier cities like Wenzhou.

Pi once tried to work in Shanghai before settling in Wenzhou, but found it hard. "We can't fit in, in big cities. Locals have it etched into their minds that 'migrant worker' is synonymous with 'uneducated, backward, stinky slob,'" Pi said.

Though the pay was lower in Wenzhou, Pi said he found the life much easier.

The new migrants are also less concerned about how much they earn, focusing instead on what they can learn, Song said.

According to a survey by Song's research team, 32 percent of the 450 young migrants polled in Beijing and Shanghai were graduates of vocational schools.

The survey found that 54.2 percent of the respondents said improving themselves was the reason they left home.

Though Pi is comparatively well off, he plans to pursue a training course in management. "I wanted to learn more while I'm still young; earning money wasn't why I moved," he said.

Behind the prestigious award

Time's award may cast the spotlight on workers, but their jobs are hardly enviable.

A recent online survey showed that only 1 percent of respondents say they would dare to be a worker in China. Manual labor comes with a poor salary.

Instead, the educated scramble to fill openings in government, banks and multinational companies, the survey said.

There are still many problems unsolved for migrant workers,

among which is *hukou*, the residence registration that grants a Chinese citizen access to social services, Song said.

Without *hukou*, migrants cannot enjoy the same rights as urban residents. Their children will not be able to get proper education as the schools for migrant children are notoriously backward.

Unpaid wages remains another bane of the worker. An investigation by the National Statistic Bureau shows that 20 percent of the 30,000 workers were unpaid, paid late or never paid in full.

Song said the problem is so widespread that in some sectors it is considered the norm: especially in construction. "As long as they have a place to stay and food to eat, the migrants won't stop working even if they are not paid. If they stop working, they will have nothing to eat," he said.

There are no accurate figures about how many Chinese people live as migrants. An estimate from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) points to 150 million people, or almost 12 percent of the nation.

Only 23 to 30 percent of these workers have labor contracts, Song said.

Most do not have pension plans or health insurance, and their employers make no guarantees of compensation for major accidents, Song said.

Policies to improve the status of migrant workers have been delayed for years, but Song says *Time* magazine's recognition may be a good starting point.

"It is all about time," he said.



Will the dice keep rolling?

Macau last weekend celebrated its 10th anniversary since its return to China from Portuguese rule.

The city in the past decade has heavily invested in building up its gambling industry, overtaking Las Vegas to become the world's most profitable gaming center. But many residents feel that Macau needs to diversify its economy.

Macau seeking to diversify economy a decade after return to China

One country, two systems

President Hu Jintao said in Macau last weekend that the "one country, two systems" is an important part of China's rejuvenation.

"The great motherland is always a strong backup force for prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macau," Hu said in a speech during the 10th anniversary celebration of Macau's return to China.

The success of "one country, two systems" involves efforts from the central government and the governments of Hong Kong and Macau, he said, adding that government's future policies for the special administrative regions (SAR) would advance the prosperity, stability and livelihood of SAR for residents.

Before his speech, Hu swore in Macau's new chief executive Fernando Chui along with top SAR officials and members of the Executive Council.

Gambling dispute

Macau, the only place in the country where gambling is legal, saw spiraling growth in its gaming industry after opening up the century-old sector to foreign competition in 2002. It has six licensed gaming operators, including US

gaming giants Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Wynn Resorts.

The island city, home to more than 30 casinos and 4,600 gaming tables, has overtaken Las Vegas in terms of gaming revenue.

Casinos contribute more than 70 percent of the Macau government's revenues, paying about 35 percent of their income in gaming taxes. Official statistics show more than 40,000 of the city's 540,000 residents work in the gambling sector.

To lessen Macau's overwhelming reliance on gambling, the government vowed to "appropriately diversify" the city's economy by expanding tourism, including building upscale shopping malls, resorts and convention centers.

Kwan Fung, director-general of the Macao Society of Social Sciences, said the gambling industry remains key to promoting tourism. "It's critical for Macau to optimize the gambling sector to boost tourism, including sight-seeing, leisure travel, shopping and conventions," he said. "It needs to upgrade the hotel, retail, convention, catering and recreational industries."

Macau's former chief executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah said this would take time to achieve.

Analysis

Where is Macau gambling headed?

For now, Macau gaming is on the up again. Casino revenues rose 59 percent in November. But where does Macau go from here?

President Hu Jintao repeated his call for Macau to diversify its economy during a visit last week.

Cirque du Soleil is among the firms eager to respond. The Montreal-based entertainment company, which has six permanent shows in Las Vegas, launched the \$150-million (1 billion yuan) production *Zaia* at Venetian Macao casino resort last year.

"When visitors return from Hong Kong, friends ask, 'What did you buy?' When people return from Macau, they're asked, 'How much did you win?' Now Macau wants to become 'What did you win? What did you buy? And what did you see?'" said Alan Hills, head of Cirque du Soleil's Asia Pacific Regional Office.

"Right now you don't come to Macau for entertainment. We're starting to change that," he said, but conceded that developing the city's entertainment industry "is going to take the most time."

Teresa Costa Gomes, public relations executive with the Macau Special Administrative Region tourist office, said Macau has "more to offer visitors than just the rolling dice." The city's cobbled streets, centuries-old architecture, piazzas and churches earned it a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2005.

Macau, which measures less than 30 square kilometers, has 18 museums on subjects such as wine, fire control and Portuguese buildings.

Pop concerts, music and art festivals, a Grand Prix race and dragon-boat racing are drawing more foreign tourists, Gomes said.

(Agencies)

Tiger poacher sentenced to 12 years in jail

A man who shot dead a rare tiger in the southwest was sentenced to 12 years in prison and fined 580,000 yuan, Xinhua News Agency reported Tuesday.

According to a court in Yunnan Province, Kang Wannian and another man shot the creature in a nature reserve in February, Xinhua said.

When the men realized they had killed an Indochinese Tiger, which is on China's list of endangered species, they got scared and ran away, leaving the corpse behind, the report said.

The second man, Gao Zuqiao, later returned to the animal's body with six other people, skinned and dismembered the tiger and brought the bones and flesh home to eat, Xinhua said.

Kang was sentenced to 12 years in jail for the illegal possession of a gun and poaching a wild, endangered animal. Gao was jailed for four years and ordered to pay 20,000 yuan for aiding Kang in covering up the crime.

Three others were also found guilty of covering up the crime, and put on probation for four years.

The court refused to comment when contacted by AFP.

According to the Save the Tiger Fund, a 1998 expert assessment estimated that only 736 to 1,225 Indochinese Tigers were left in the wild.

The group said the animals have been severely poached in many areas, and have disappeared from reserves in Cambodia and Thailand in the last 10 years.

Shaolin planning travel venture, share listing

The famed fighting monks of Shaolin Temple plan a foray into modern finance.

The local government entity in charge of managing the 1,500-year-old Buddhist temple's tourism-related assets plans to join with China Travel Service in a venture that will seek to raise up to 1 billion yuan in a share listing on either a mainland market or in Hong Kong, reports said Thursday.

A spokeswoman for state-owned China Travel Service in Hong Kong confirmed the cooperation and said her company would be issuing an announcement later.

Calls to Shaolin Temple and the local government in Dengfeng, Henan Province, rang unanswered Thursday.

Shaolin, its monks and their distinctive form of kung fu have have reinvented themselves as a lucrative business enterprise, upsetting some who disapprove of the commercialism of the temple's business-savvy abbot, Shi Yongxin.

Since taking over as abbot in the 1990s, Shi has moved aggressively to promote the Shaolin brand, threatening to sue companies that use the temple's name or image without permission and serving as executive producer for martial arts films centered on the temple.

(Agencies)



Macau's new Chief Executive Fernando Chui said the city plans to diversify its economy over the next five years.

CFP Photo

Social responsibility reports called into question



Adidas scored a stunning -2 points in the corporate social responsibility report.

CFP Photo

State-owned enterprises perform better than private and multinational companies in corporate social responsibility, according to a report released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

But some analysts question the report's methodology and results.

As an example, Li Youhuan, a researcher at the Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, told the *Global Times* that the report does not reflect the reality of corporate social responsibility because it

focuses on what the companies say rather than what they do.

In November, PricewaterhouseCoopers analyzed 600 Chinese companies' responsibility reports, citing a discrepancy between what the companies wrote in their reports and what they actually did.

The report compared 100 state-owned companies, 100 private companies and 100 multinational companies, which were evaluated for their responsibility management, market responsibility, social responsibility and environmental

responsibility based on information released by the companies including their reports.

On a scale of 100 points, the 300 companies averaged 20.2 points: state-owned companies averaged 30.6 points and private companies averaged 17.9 points.

The report found that only 14 companies received more than 60 points, including 12 state-owned companies such as State Grid Corporation of China, China Datang Corporation and China National Petroleum Corporation, as well as

two private companies, Legend Holdings and Ping An Insurance, according to the article.

A total of 179 companies received below 20 points, including 79 multinationals such as Adidas, Nike and Microsoft.

In August, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo were named two of the top-12 polluters of water by the Beijing Development and Reform Commission. In 2007, more than 90 multinational companies were targeted by Chinese environmental authorities for pollution dating back to 2004.

Official

Why foreign corporations lag

Zhong Hongwu, director of research into corporate social responsibility at the CASS, said the reason multinationals lagged was that they rarely released their data.

"Many of the multinational companies do not even have a web-

site, let alone one that issues corporate social responsibility reports or annual reports. We don't know what they're doing," Zhong said.

He said that 10 of the multinational companies did not have Chinese websites and 12 multinational companies never announced their

social projects online.

Since the research center did not use questionnaires for the survey, big corporations that do not frequently announce their public works were automatically penalized, Zhong said.

"Corporate social responsibil-

ity is still at its nascent stage, and about 40 percent of the companies are not getting involved," he said. "The current problem is that most companies don't want to, are afraid to or have nothing to say about their social works."

(Agencies)

Expert

Social responsibility during financial fallout

While social responsibility may seem like a good place to cut costs without damaging core business, there are other ways to manage it strategically.

Align social efforts with your business: Which activities can be "dialed up" to save costs? Which help employees and the general perception of your company - which is likely to fall in a downturn? Rising energy and material costs make social responsibility a good place to start cutting costs, and saving money means avoiding layoff.

Make sure your portfolio of social work is broad enough to

encompass activities that contribute to tangible - and material - business success. One approach is to sit down and make a list of what social projects you are engaged in.

Also, consider the costs of not contributing to society: cutting programs seems fine until you become the next headline - whether because of a fine you incurred from a waste leakage, a supplier who cut corners by using child labor or an Internet campaign vilifying your donations as a publicity stunt.

For the rest, "think R&D": social priorities that do not provide the near-term relief of cost savings

often create and communicate credible links to long-term success and profitability. Like R&D, social responsibility is about disciplined action that sustains and increases the value of your products, your people and trust in your brand.

Always be ready with clear and compelling measurements of the benefits: tangible and intangible benefits are important drivers of success in any social project even in the best of times. When business is bad, it can make the difference between continued internal support, cut backs and eliminations.

By making social responsibil-

ity a strategic imperative you can also multiply its impact companywide. Saving tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars at an individual facility through energy saving and waste reduction is a good thing. But the impact is much greater if those efforts can be duplicated elsewhere.

If all goes well, the next time you are questioned about whether the company can afford to maintain its commitment to improve social performance, your CFO will say: "We can't afford not to."

- Eric Olson, vice president of BSR, a US consultant

Western Union aids migrant school

By Huang Daoheng

Some 688 students between the ages of 12 and 15, all children of migrant workers, graduated from a financial curriculum offered at Dandelion School, a local secondary school, thanks to the sponsorship by The Western Union Foundation.

The program teaches the children the fundamentals of finance so they may consider a range of options such as higher education and skills training.

It was developed and led by MercyCorps, a non-governmental organization with which Western Union collaborates.

The 11-week course was tailored to three grades of secondary school students as well as vocational students. The students were taught personal and family financial management to enable them to decide upon better higher education or career options.

The course also instructed 60 parents from the community.

"We hope that by enhancing the financial management skills of the children of migrant workers we can increase their chance of future employability and give them real choice about their future," said Amin Ng, chief representative of Western Union China.

The course materials were designed to be vivid and easy to understand. "In China there is a proverb: 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime,'" said Guo Xin, project manager of Mercy Corps China.

"Our aim is to improve the personal life skills and employability of these adolescent migrant youth, and hopefully encourage the more entrepreneurially minded of them to consider how they can set up their own businesses," Guo said.

The pilot program, which launched in autumn 2009, was welcomed by teachers and students alike. "This financial education course established a clear connection between the theory of financial management and the practical skills needed to manage money in the real world through teaching, visits and lectures by financial experts," said Zheng Hong, principal of the Dandelion School in Daxing District.

To test the students, Dandelion school introduced a competition called the "Little Financial Expert."

"The course and the competition provided a channel for the students to propose cost-effective ideas to support the school's financial management and to help them improve their own life skills," Zheng said.

Another extravagant marriage search raises eyebrows



Are you Mr Right? Lover seekers' parties become prevalent across the country.

CFP Photo

By Venus Lee

Last Sunday, a group of wealthy men spent 10 million yuan each to join a "wife seekers' party" in Beijing's Junwangfu Hotel. Many netizens frowned on the husband-wannabes, saying they were treating love as another commodity.

Forty-three people from across the country attended the party, 21 of them men. The men, who ranged in age from 26 to 46, all had a net worth of billions of yuan.

The female participants, meanwhile, were screened based on beauty, intellect and figure. The youngest was 21, the oldest 30.

The event consisted of three parts: the introduction, talent show and bridal display.

Wang Yangfei, 40, the president of a financial software company in Shanghai, said ordinary people cannot imagine how hard it is for men like him to find a partner. "Many people may wonder why people like us who have a good education and a high-paying job still cannot get a girlfriend. Our emotional experiences are not as splendid as other people think. We become symbols of power, fortune and social status. You cannot know how lonely it is at the top until you are in my shoes," he said.

Tang Hui, 36, vice president of a real estate company, said men like him dream about meeting their princess. "Once there's a good chance we can meet them, we're willing to buy the chance no matter how much money we have to pay," he said. "Me spending 10 million is comparable to someone spending a hundred yuan to find a wife. The money is worth it if I can find my partner here."

Meanwhile, a female attendee, 25-year-old Pan Li, said there was no crime in wanting to be happy. "Everybody has the right to seek happiness. I've just taken the first step," the photographer and recent graduate of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute said.

The party's organizers said 80 percent of participants found a match by the end of the event.

Comment

Rich people also yearn for true love

There's not much difference between rich and ordinary people when it comes to seeking marriage. Billionaires are also human. They also yearn for simple and true love. And their basic requirements for a mate are the same as those of ordinary men: someone good-looking, upright, from a lower socio-economic status, passive and a virgin.

I believe most women who attended the party were likewise looking for intelligent, emotionally healthy men.

— Duan Qigang, a book editor

Discrimination against women

Inequality between males and females persists. In the marriage market men are still the buyers. Those who have cars, houses and well-paying careers have an advantage. What women can sell are their temperaments, good looks and loyalty.

In the marriage market, men who have wealth can speak louder about their preferred appearance, sexual experience and age.

— Susan Clear, a freelancer

Treat it calmly

There's nothing to criticize about extravagant marriage-seeking behaviors as long as the men's wealth was earned through honest means. I think rich people's marriage search is always controversial because of their unfavorable social image. There's disdain toward the rich because many question the source of their wealth; this is aggravated when they show off on the search for Ms. Right. But if they did more charity work, I think fewer people would frown on their lavish match-making parties.

— Huan Huan, teacher at Communication University of China

Expert

According to the latest census, the number of single people in Beijing and Shanghai has topped 1 million: in 1990 the figure was 100,000. The population of singles between ages 30 and 50 continues to rise sharply. The country is about to see its fourth wave of people choosing to stay single.

Unlike the previous three waves, the fourth wave can be attributed to economic pressures. More and more people are terrified of the responsibility of buying a house and a car, and of the increasing cost of a wedding.

The first wave occurred in the 1950s when many were swept up by the revolutionary fervor and had no time to consider marriage. Those who went into arranged marriages earlier contributed to the country's first "divorce boom," after the People's Republic enacted its marriage law in May 1950.

The second wave happened in the late 1970s. After the Cultural Revolution, many educated young people returned to the city from countryside, resulting in a rapid increase of single women in urban areas. Most of the men married local girls

where they worked; the women preferred to stay unmarried since they could not get along with men from the countryside. The central government even convened a meeting in 1984 to discuss the problem of unmarried youth.

The third wave came in the late 1990s. No one would call the "problem of staying single" a crisis anymore, nor would the government hold a special meeting to solve the problem. The singles were mainly made up of those between ages 28 and 38 who had flourishing careers and good income. Staying single became a choice rather than the consequence of "bad conditions."

The "marriage crisis" is less prominent in medium-sized and small cities. Facing less intense pressures, young people there are accustomed to a stable life and plan to have a family to contribute to the regularity of life. They also face fewer temptations than their counterparts in big cities, and their personal goals are more practical.

— Cai Fang, vice director of Demography and Labor Economics Research Center, Chinese Academy of Social Science

Debate of the week

Culture Ministry eliminates 'theft'

On December 21, based on an order from the Ministry of Culture, Kaixin001 and QQ changed the term "theft" in their farm games to "harvesting" and "picking." So if you used to "steal" a black rose from another player's plot, now you "picked" the flower.

"Dear fellow thieves, there is good news! The government has renamed 'stealing vegetables.' It is now known as 'picking vegetables,' just like you picking vegetables from your own plot," a netizen said.

On November 18, the ministry issued a notice asking for "the establishment of proper direction for cultural values."

At Kaixin001, players wait until the plants ripen then swoop in. If you are a second late, you would only see a sign reading, "All stolen" together with a list of who stole what. Now it reads, "All harvested" together with the names of harvesters.

All farms used to have a warning sign that reads, "Anyone who steals will have to pay back eventually." It too has been changed: "Anyone who picks will have to pay back eventually."

Many netizens were puzzled by the term change and said the Ministry of Culture should not meddle in such matters. Others said "thievery has been legitimized by being euphemized as 'harvesting'" and jabbed that the department should think of a new term for "taking bribes."

Don't take drunken friend home

A Nanjing resident's blog post has triggered a discussion about the wisdom of bringing home a drunken friend. "I took my colleague home and now I have to pay 100,000 yuan," the man, surnamed Tan, wrote.

He said that on February 19, he and several colleagues had dinner and drinks. Afterward, his colleague Zhu Peixun insisted on going home on his motorcycle. Because the roads were wet from rain and Zhu was drunk, Tan took him home in a cab.

Zhu's house was on a lane too narrow for the cab to enter, so he told Tan he would walk the remaining 30 meters. "Don't bother to go with me," he kept insisting, according to Tan. So Tan left in the taxi. The next morning, Zhu was found dead from exposure near his home.

A month later, Zhu's family sued Tan. Five months later, the court found Tan guilty of "failing to carry out his duty to see Zhu home" and ordered him to pay damages of 106,000 yuan. "I've been so wronged!" Tan wrote. "I was trying to be kind-hearted and this is what I get."

(zонаeuropa.com)

French photographer holds up mirror to photos

By Han Manman

"Me, by You," French photographer Elisa Haberer's latest exhibition, seeks to demystify how we regard representations of ourselves.

"Our image in our eyes and our image in other people's eyes complement yet contradict each other. It's a combination of our inner desires and reality," Haberer said at the exhibition's opening last weekend at The Orange in Sanlitun's The Village.

For the project, Haberer gathered 45 Chinese people and Westerners from various backgrounds and photographed each of them in the same studio, using the same lighting and under the same conditions. Before each photo shoot, she asked each person eight questions, including, "What do you expect the result of this portrait to be?"

Participants were finally shown two of their portraits and were asked to choose the one that best represents themselves or that they wanted others to see. Haberer also chose a picture based on the person's answers to her eight questions and what she believes best represents him or her.

"When people are photographed, they project what they want others to see. The interesting question is what others actually see," Haberer, 32, said.

Loic Grasset, a Frenchman and one of the participants, said he wanted to be "irre-

most film on. Each time the flash went, he would strike a different pose – maybe as a way to satisfy his huge ego," Haberer said.

Grasset was surprised when he finally saw the final product. "This series of photos presents a different image of

reflected in Grasset's eyes "this feeling of being mentally here while also mentally away."

Haberer began her career as a freelance photojournalist – a rarity in Europe, she said.

"I like being independent, it's a great feeling, even though sometimes funds become tight," she said.

Her current projects as an independent photographer still take her around the world, but she says she focuses on the art of portraiture and highlighting the "human story."

In 2004, she co-founded Fedephoto, an online platform for independent photographers. It now has 90 members all over the globe.

She came to China in 2007 and has spent her time since then trying to capture through her lens the country's energy and distinctiveness. Her projects in the past two years included a photo reportage titled "1.3 billion sportsmen," which was exhibited in Beijing and in France last year.

"I'm starting to think about my next project, a project around the idea of the 'middle class.' It's a huge concept, which has a lot of meanings if you're in China," she said.



Grasset chose the left photo as his favorite, but Haberer says the right one shows the real Grasset.

Photos provided by Elisa Haberer

sistible" even while showing his flaws. "I hope Haberer will manage to capture the ambivalence and cracks in my personality while at the same time making me utterly irresistible in the photo and an object of seduction," he said.

It turned out Grasset was not joking. "Grasset must have been the one model I used the

me from the one I envisioned," he said. "But I like one photo of an unmasked me – one that shows a dangerous, manipulative, disturbing edge to me that I may not necessarily want to present to the world."

The Frenchman chose a tamer, more "realistic" photo of himself. Haberer's definition of "real" was a photo that



Elisa Haberer

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American couple opens Tongzhou's first English library

By Zhang Dongya

"My vision for Tongzhou is to someday see an English library owned and operated by the Tongzhou government, containing books and other media, open from at least 9 am to 9 pm every day, within 75 meters of a bus stop," a former Tongzhou official once said. Jim Habib made that vision a reality.

Last week, Jim and his wife Lorene, American retirees, opened a small library in the eastern district. It contains 400 English and Chinese books gathered through donations. The couple is expecting 5,000 more English books from the US.

Jim, 75, hopes that one day the library will also include books in French, German, Spanish and other foreign languages.



The Habibs set up an English corner in Tongzhou in 2006.

An English library's beginning

The New Generation English Library is located in a former printing plant on Tongzhou's Xinhua Avenue. The library itself is only a tenth the size of a basketball court, yet the Habibs tried to make it cozy with the addition of furniture: second-hand bookshelves, a sofa, desks and chairs.

There are two bookshelves: one contains English books from the couple's family and friends; the other has Chinese reading materials donated by locals.

Besides teaching English, the Habibs had been working toward establishing a local English library since they moved to Tongzhou in 2005. Before the New Generation library, there was the New Generation Club, the group of students who took part in the couple's weekly English Corner. The couple's daughter Judy, 50, quit her job in the US to come to China and help with her parents' projects.

Volunteers also lent a hand. Jon Fang, 27, signed up with New Generation Club three years ago. He is in charge of its administrative work and external communications. Sarah Liu, 26, came on board last Sunday and brought sofa covers she made herself.

Among the visitors on the library's opening day was a couple from Hebei Province and their 10-year-old daughter. The father said they heard about it online and drove for an hour to see the place.

Helping hands in the US

The Habibs have collected 5,000 more books in the US, but their shipment has been delayed because of tariff problems. "The tariff goes by the cost of the book. Most of the books we got for free, but on the back of the book it says how much it originally cost. So even if it was an old book, they still go by that cost," Judy said.

To the Habibs' surprise,



The library contains 300 books and expects 5,000 more from the US.



The Habib family (from left: Judy, Judy's daughter Abby, Lorene, Jim) hope to one day put up a big foreign-language library.

Photos provided by the New Generation English Library

people in the US heard of their predicament and offered to help.

Guo Yonglu and his friend Ma Daren, Chinese nationals living in Los Angeles, said they will try to find a way to transport the books for free. Four years ago, Ma, a scholar who

also worked in US libraries, appealed to his fellow Chinese in North America to donate books to university libraries in China. Since then, his group has shipped at least 200,000 books; this year they sent six container vans of books.

Guo and Ma also share the

Habibs' dream of building a large library of foreign language books.

Two decades ago in China

In 1989, Jim worked for three months as an engineer in Pingshuo, Shanxi Province, one of the country's biggest coal-mining areas. He kept two albums of photos from that time that showed coal mines, machines, his interpreter, Chinese workers, as well as the dogs they raised.

"When I went back to America, I left my heart in China," Jim said.

After his retirement in 1999, he applied for a job with his former company in China, but he instead got one in India. To his delight, when he arrived in India, he found an opportunity to return to China.

He has visited Pingshuo several times since 2000. He saw big changes in the town and in residents' lives, but it was setting foot in Tongzhou in 2005 that made him realize he had found a new home.

Learning and teaching culture

The following year, Jim and Lorene, 75, started a weekly English Corner in Tongzhou. Every Saturday afternoon, the couple would meet with Chinese people in Xihazi Park. A few months later, they moved to a McDonald's restaurant with the local government's help.

About 30 people show up each week. Sometimes attendees number 80.

The Habibs' lessons include idiomatic expressions and practical dialogue like "how to make a good impression on an American employer." Some lessons are given by Chinese college students from Beijing International Studies University and Beijing Wuzi University. They also screen movies; they use DVDs sent from the US to ensure the English subtitles are correct.

When Jim teaches students about US culture, he makes sure it is not something that will cause a conflict. "There is a culture crash between the two countries," he said. "We do not impart American culture that bothers the Chinese."

He also believes learning Chinese culture is as important as teaching US culture. "We've tried very hard to be cooperative and friendly in doing things. That's why we took three years to start a small library," he said.

On the back of Jim's business card is a quote adapted from US writer Edward Hale, which explains Jim's personal philosophy. It talks about the power of one person: "I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

Third swing contest reflects growing community



Winners at this year's China Swing Dance Contest

Photos by Zeng Weiming

By Joshua Dominick/Annie Wei

This year's China Swing Dance Contest, held December 12 at Salsa Caribe in Sanlitun, showed that the dance is gaining a foothold on the mainland.

The contest, which brought together some of the region's best swing dancers, was divided into three main categories: a debut class for beginners, a main class for more experienced dancers and a mixed-level "Jack & Jill" event in which competitors were judged individually.

James Li, an IT project manager, and Tracy Jia, a buyer for a German company, took first place in the debut category. Jia has been a hip-hop and salsa aficionado for the past five years. Li Jie, a journalist, and Zeng Weiming, a jazz sax player, took top honors in the main class.

Zeng also placed first among experienced dancers in the Jack & Jill category, while Sophie Sun, an English translator, was No. 1 among beginners. Prizes included tour packages to swing dance

events around Asia.

The contest, organized by Swing Beijing and now on its third year, brings dancers from Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and the US to the capital. Many of this year's participants wowed judges with their skill despite having discovered swing less than a year ago.

"It was lot of fun. I guess that's the charm of swing," Zeng said.

A big draw this year was Sinclair Ang, a swing instructor and performer in Singapore. Ang, who has been dancing for more than 10 years, has helped build a thriving dance scene in the city-state. Aside from judging the contest, he also performed and conducted a series of workshops.

The event also featured one of China's most admired swing jazz bands, Beijing Big Band.

The country's swing scene is steadily growing. In Beijing, members of Swing Beijing practice and perform in public every Sunday afternoon, either in the square of The Village in Sanlitun



The mixed level "Jack & Jill" competition

or by the south gate of Chaoyang Park.

The dance became better known domestically when *Feng sheng* (The Message) hit the big screen this year. The film features a beautifully dance scene between actress Zhou Xun and Adam Lee, the founder of Swing Beijing.

Swing is a jazz-inspired couples dance that reached its height

in the 1930s and '40s, growing alongside American jazz legends like Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington. The dance saw a renaissance in the '90s with the help of American dancing legend Frankie Manning. In Asia, South Korea has the biggest swing scene with 3,000 regular dancers.

Swing Beijing also offers private classes. For more details, visit swingbeijing.com.

Party aims to collect toys, school supplies for migrant children

By Annie Wei

Networkclub.com is sponsoring January 13 its second annual Beijing Holiday Party, a charity event to collect toys and school supplies for local migrant children.

The dinner affair features live music by international musicians, delicacies from the city's top restaurants and a donation-based silent auction at The Orange in Sanlitun's The Village.

The event aims to generate greater awareness of the plight of migrant children and harness the efforts of concerned individuals and corporations.

Donations will be used to provide selected migrant schools with supplies like textbooks, pens, pen-



Beijing Holiday Party aims to collect toys and school supplies for migrant children.

Photos provided by Beijing Holiday Party

cils, crayons, paper and teaching aids. Organizers will also give the schools toys and playground equipment.

Donations at last year's fund-

raiser translated into 1,400 gifts for the city's migrant children, as well as 500 free meals for them in winter.

The public can help by bring-

ing toys or nonperishable food to the event, or by volunteering to help at the party, according to network.com, a networking group in town composed of Chinese and foreign professionals.

Migrant schools are schools established to serve communities of workers whose children are ineligible to attend public school because their *hukou* does not grant access to Beijing's public services. Beijing has at least 600 migrant schools that enroll tens of thousands of children ages 6 to 14.

To find out more about Beijing Holiday Party and how to get involved in helping migrant schools in town, check out beijingholidayparty.com.

Event

Dumpling-making lessons

Chopsticks cafe and bar offers cooking lessons to tourists who want to learn how to prepare Chinese dishes. It also explains the culture and history behind the food. Participants will learn how to make a variety of dishes, including dumplings, an all-time favorite.

Where: Chopsticks cafe and bar, 12 Yandaixie Jie, Di'anmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: Monday - Thursday

Cost: 100 yuan per person (maximum of three per class)

Tel: 6402 8988

Child's world of Shakespeare

US director and actor Joseph Graves performs a self-written monologue. The piece, based on personal experience, explores the comical stories of a 6-year-old boy and his thoughts about Shakespeare.

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dongmianhua Hutong (off Nan Louguxiang), Dongcheng District

When: December 25-26, 7:30-9 pm

Tel: 6400 6452

Cost: 120 yuan

Argentinean tango

This evening, Camila Tango Salon is holding a culture party and open class in its new venue at SOHO New Town. Juan Manuel Rosales, an Argentinean tango master, will give free lessons. Afterwards, he will talk about the essence of tango culture and his take on the dance.

Where: Room 604, Building 6, SOHO New Town, Xi Dawang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 25, 8-11 pm

Tel: 8552 5228 (for inquiries and reservations)

Cost: Free (spend at least 40 yuan on drinks)

8th Red Bull Nanshan Open national qualifier

Tomorrow, local snowboarders will be pushing their limits in an attempt to qualify for the 8th Red Bull Nanshan Open, the country's first major snowboarding contest. Snowboarders of every nationality, age and level are welcome to participate.

The Quiksilver Nanshan Mellow Park will host the qualifier, which will select six snowboarders who will move on to the 8th Red Bull Nanshan Open to be held January 9 to 10 next year. The top four winner will also receive cash rewards. Up for grabs too are prizes from Quiksilver, Dakine and Nike 6.0 for categories such as Brightest Outfit and Oldest Rider.

Where: Quiksilver Nanshan Mellow Park, Nanshan Ski Village, Miyun County

When: December 26, 9 am - 3 pm

Web: mellowparks.cn

(By Wei Ying)

Basketball tournament seeks more players



Students perform drills during a training session at Beijing's Dulwich College

Photo provided by www.five-starbasketball.cn

By Zhao Hongyi

The Five-Star and Iballs' International Basketball Tournament, which runs until January 24, is calling for more participants.

The tournament, organized by Five-Star Basketball China training camp, needs a roster of 12 teams. The competition is two-thirds of the way through, but is still short five teams, organizers said.

"We welcome all interested teams and individuals," David Gros, the camp's general manager, said in a media release, adding that registration will be open for the next two weeks.

Katy Xiao, a Five-Star staff, said "each

team needs to pay a registration fee of 6,000 yuan for the facilities, referees and awards." Organizers will also provide medical insurance to players, she said.

Games are held every Saturday and Sunday at the Canadian International School in Liangmaqiao, Chaoyang District. "It's a good sporting competition that helps you loosen up on the weekend," one of the players told reporters who came to watch the games.

Five-Star Basketball is a US-based training camp founded in 1966 and in the past two years has become increasingly popular in China. According to the

company, among its alumni are National Basketball Association (NBA) stars such as Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Vince Carter and Alonzo Mourning.

Five-Star also sells basketball equipment and paraphernalia at its office in Liangmaqiao.

Five-Star Basketball China

Where: 22 Dongfang Dong Lu, 10-2 Liangmaqiao Diplomatic Compound, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8532 1919 (look for David Gros or Katy Xiao)

Email: kxiao@five-starbasketball.cn

Web: five-starbasketball.cn

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiying@ynet.com

I'm looking for a private martial arts instructor. Do you have any recommendations?

Check out Circle of Iron, a martial arts training center in Dongdan, Dongcheng District. It offers both private and group lessons on Pentjak Silat, Jeet Kune Do, muay Thai, Kali and Jujitsu. It also teaches practical self-defense and handling weapons such as knives, swords and sticks. For more information, visit its website: circleofiron.zoomshare.com.

I read your story about the vinyl music trend last week. Where can I find these albums in Beijing?

The electronics and second-hand markets near Nüren Jie have shops selling vinyl, most of them on the top floor. You will find hip-hop, house and DJ collections. A shop called Waiting for Godot (24 Jiadaokou Dong Lu, Dongcheng District) near Subway Line 5's Beixinqiao station has a small but interesting selection. It has old Chinese records along with Western retro.

Do you know of a climbing gym within Fifth Ring Road that is suitable for working out in winter?

Try Ole Climbing, which has a lot of indoor facilities: a huge bouldering area, a slackline section and a 12-meter indoor top rope and lead wall. This winter it boasts of heated floors. You will meet climbers of different levels, ages and nationalities, and the staff is well trained and very helpful. It also rents out and sells climbing equipment.

Where: 5 Shimen Cun Lu, Baiziwan Qiao Dong, Dongsihuan, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 9 pm

Tel: 5128 2825 or 6776 0608

Web: oleclimbing.com

Which bookstore in town sells fashion design books? I prefer English books, but Chinese ones are OK too.

Check out Timezone books in 798 Art District (4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District, Tel. 8456 0336). There are also plenty online at dangdang.com.

(By Wei Ying)

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The Wrinkle Series is Xie Dong's first work in bone china in which she tries to bend and fold ceramics.

Photo provided by Xie Dong

“Design should be simple and convenient. Anything extra would be a waste.”

— Jesus Yeh, Hong Kong designer and chief creative director of Yehidea Home Design



Liu Feng's Are You Kidult Series

Photo provided by Liu Feng

Art for applied

Top Chinese designers create for

Hong Kong designer and chief creative director of Yehidea Home Design, Jesus Yeh, reaches each morning for a lemon squeezer by French designer Philippe Starck.

The squeezer's shape was inspired by a lunch of squid garnished with lemons on the Isle of Capri and has much in common with the cephalopods – long legs and an inverted, drooping body.

Starck is the best known designer putting art into mass production, and his efforts have made him an icon in China.

“I bought this squeezer 20 years ago and I will use it until I design something better,” Yeh said.

Yeh's droplet-shaped teapot won this year's Red Dot Design Award, an international product design prize awarded in Germany and equivalent to an Oscar.

The teapot, inspired by a Chinese saying that good water makes good tea, is made of bone china and has no handle. Traditional teapot designs always have some kind of handle. “The handle adds too much and is too traditional. I wanted to make everything simple and modern,” he said.

Practicality comes first in good product design. His teapot utilizes a double wall to keep water hot without raising the exterior temperature high enough to burn the teapot's handler.

The teapot is designed for pu'er tea and lacks filtration pores. “Design should be simple and convenient. Anything extra would be a waste,” he said.

Yeh's surprising designs always draw on life. In 2006, he made a sperm-themed teapot and cup. The design was inspired by Robin Baker's book *Sperm Wars: The Science of Sex*.

The sperm shape provided an iconic image for the handle of the teapot and the cup. “I didn't want to make people disgusted when they saw it, so I tried to keep things artistic,” he said.

But if Yeh's design subverts the traditional image of a teapot, then it's hard to find a word for another Hong Kong designer Stanley Wong Ping-pui's sofa.

Called “Impermanent,” Wong's interchangeable sofa doubles as a bed – and triples as a coffin.

The design is a metaphor for life and death. He created it to be something he could use for 30 to 50 years, then afterward when he dies.

The “Impermanent” exhibit includes two sofas. One is a sofa where the coffin lid is used as a tea table. In the other, the lid is closed to create a bed.

“I thought that by interacting intimately with the sofa bed everyday, I might get a sense of how ‘death’ is part of life,” Wong said.

While the placard in front of the exhibit invites onlookers to take a nap, no one dared try.

“Creative works can be cultural, gadgets or magical. For me, the most important thing is that they link people with society and create a space to share thoughts and expressions,” he said.

Unlike Wong's bold designs, Lu Yongzhong and Xie Dong's works are easier for people to accept and have been more successful in the market.

Lu's brand Banmoo, founded in Shanghai in 2006, creates simple, stylish and tasteful furniture and daily accessories.

Lu looks to tradition and history to adapt traditional Chinese life for the modern world. At first glance, his chairs, benches and tables look like they are from Han (206 BC – 220 AD) or Ming (1368-1644) dynasty, but each takes on a modern concept.

“Space and furniture, in my mind, have always been an integral whole. I look for a reasonable form and strict logic to support it. Designing furniture is about designing life. It has weight. Life can't be made to step out of the way of artistic conception, not even temporarily,” Lu said.

Lu prefers to use wood, while Xie loves to make porcelain products.

She works with phenomena such as heaviness and lightness, the dynamics of shape and complex technical processes. Her ceramic designs bend and ripple.

The Wrinkle Series is her first work in bone china in which she tries to bend and fold ceramics. “Folds can differ from piece to piece; either they are sharp like crumpled paper, or sleek like plastic or cloth,” she said.

Later, she tried to capture fluid dynamics such as flowing water, air, melting ice and marine life in her works.

Her approach to design is that of an artist able to translate into poetry great artistic skills linked to ancient craftsmanship.

This October, her works were part of an exhibition called “China Design Now” at the Portland Art Museum Oregon, US. The display left Western media predicting that China's next dynasty may be Design.

The exhibition now in Beijing is a milestone in Chinese design. “It is the first time a group of top designers showed off their works in a museum. This may be an awakening for designers to see that China can be the center of product design,” Li Degeng, the curator said.



“Creative works can be cultural, gadgets or magical. For me, the most important thing is that they link people with society and create a space to share thoughts and expressions.”

— Stanley Wong Ping-pui
Hong Kong designer

“Space and furniture, in my mind, have always been an integral whole. I look for a reasonable form and strict logic to support it. Designing furniture is about designing life.”

— Lu Yongzhong, founder of Banmoo



Lu Yongzhong creates simple and stylish furniture.

Photo provided by Lu Yongzhong

ation

or life



The Droplet-shaped teapot won the 2009 Red Dot Design Award.

Photo provided by Jesus Yeh

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By He Jianwei

In many ways, China is a big lab where designers can experiment to their hearts' content. But it may be too soon to expect a flood of "Designed in China," even though domestic designers have been appearing on lists of the world's best.

Last Sunday, 11 top designers and design groups from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan displayed their works at Today Art Museum. Those designs achieve a new balance between form and function.

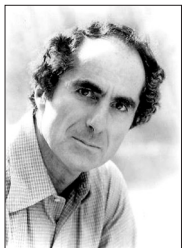


Stanley Wong Ping-pui's Impermanent interchangeable sofa doubles as a bed – and triples as a coffin.

Photo provided by Stanley Wong Ping-pui

Designing in China

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 2, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 18, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm,
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804



Where dreams die, death awaits

By Charles Zhu

In the wake of his novel *Everyman* (2006) and *Exit Ghost* (2007), Philip Roth has produced *The Humbling* (140pp, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$22), an exposé of the maddening life of Jewish actor Simon Axler, who, after decades of success on stage, suddenly finds he has lost the gift.

As the last classical American stage actor, "He'd lost his magic," the opening line tells us, and he contemplates suicide.

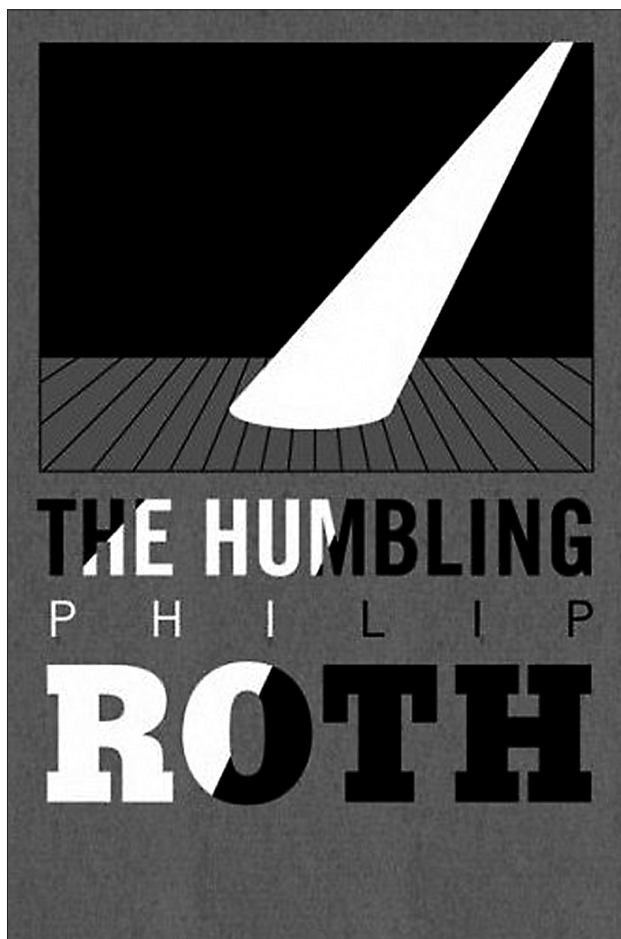
Axler is an ordinary Jewish intellectual whose struggle to cope with his own grief begets art – at least until that art no longer brings comfort and consolation.

He recalls the characters in dramatic literature who commit suicide: "He should set himself the task of rereading these plays. Yes, everything gruesome must be squarely faced. Nobody should be able to say that he did not think it through."

With passion gone, he lives a lonely life. His wife leaves with the demise of his career. He has no children, no close family members, no friends and no acquaintances. Suicide, for Axler, will sadden no one and leave no civic responsibility behind. However, he finds that he lacks the will and goes to a psychiatric hospital, where he is offered paper and crayons for "art therapy."

But psychological explanation is pointless.

"Nothing has a good reason for happening," he tells the doctor later that



day. "You lose, you gain – it's all caprice. The omnipotence of caprice. The likelihood of reversal. Yes, the unpredictable reversal and its power."

Magically, Axler gets a full night's sleep in the hospital and his condition improves. He soon returns home. But life can hardly be "normal" without work. He identifies himself with an old

sick possum that builds itself a nest on his property in which to die.

But Pegeen, an unexpected 42-year-old visitor, changes his mood. He has not seen Pegeen, a daughter of a friend, since she was a college student. She is teaching environmental science at a college in Vermont, not too far from Axler's house in upstate New York. She makes him dinner, welcomes his kisses and ends up in bed with him. Despite being a lesbian, she and Axler have an affair.

Axler, a womanizer, wonders to himself why such a devoted lesbian is drawn to him. He finds that Pegeen recently has ended her long relationship with her girlfriend Priscilla, who started taking androgens to live as a man. Flirting with the life of a heterosexual female was Pegeen's revenge.

A relationship with a young woman is dangerous for Axler – all the more since she is a lesbian. But Axler is a lonely 65-year-old man who is not capable of turning her away until one day Pegeen ends it, saying she cannot live as a substitute for his acting.

In the end, Axler kills himself as he plays Konstantin Gavrilovich in Chekhov's *Seagull*, a young writer similarly insecure about his talent.

Philip Roth said in a recent interview in *The Wall Street Journal* that *The Humbling* is third in a four-part series of novels that began with *Everyman* and *Indignation*, and will conclude in the forthcoming *Nemesis*.

How Goldman Sachs survives the crisis

By He Jianwei

Last year's global economic crisis crushed economic giants on Wall Street.

Lehman Brothers entered bankruptcy last September – the largest bankruptcy filing in US history – Bear Stearns collapsed and American International Group (AIG) suffered from a liquidity crisis.

But Goldman Sachs survived to become a primary dealer even during the crisis.

Chinese financial author Li Delin tries to discover how Goldman Sachs did it in *Kill Off the Rivals: How Goldman Sachs Survived* (277pp, Wanjian Publishing Corporation, 29.80 yuan), a bestseller since its October publication.

Li collected all materials available to the public, Goldman Sachs' partners and its rivals. Through his research, Li concludes the company played an important role in a barrel oil price, the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and the country's 2008 election.

In the first two chapters, "Farewell, Lehman Brothers," the author says Lehman Brothers had hope of surviving until "Goldman Sachs influenced South Korea's politicians, controlled Japan's stock market and snuffed out Chinese

investors' hopes for Lehman Brothers."

Founded in 1869, Goldman Sachs is closely intertwined economically and politically with the US government. Former Goldman Sachs employees Robert Rubin and Henry Paulson served as Secretary of the Treasury after leaving the firm: Rubin under President Clinton and Paulson under George W. Bush.

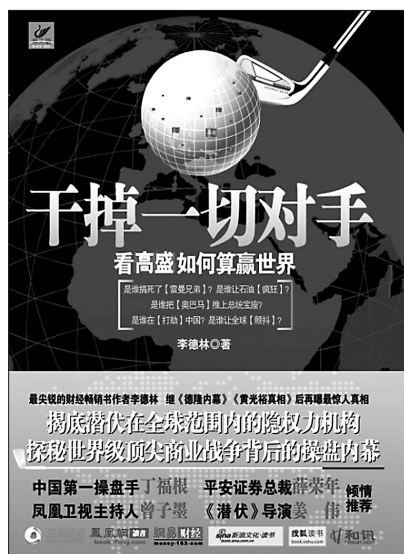
"People in Goldman Sachs can influence US politics, and that is the main reason it remains an influential company on Wall Street," Li said.

In the following chapters, Li describes how Barack Obama beat Hillary Clinton and John McCain. Goldman Sachs was the "invisible hand" pushing Obama to the presidency.

"The election is a game of financial interests. Democracy is written by money. How could Hillary Clinton lose her advantages in only several days? Money played the key role," he said.

While Li originally wanted to name the book "The Conspiracy of Goldman Sachs," he still said the company provides first-class service to its clients: a key element in its great success. Almost as key as offing its rivals at the right moments.

But the book is only 80 percent fact. Tales of former Lehman Brothers



CEO Richard Fuld storming about his house and breaking things are purely imaginative.

"These are based on assumptions. I based those assumptions on what I heard from people who know Fuld's temper very well," he said.

Although it is a book about financial issues, it reads like a fiction.

Timezone8 book listing

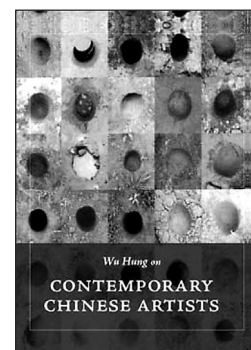
Timezone8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it lists three new titles for *Beijing Today* readers.



The Wild, Wild East: An American Art Critic's Adventures in China

By Barbara Pollack, 204pp, Timezone8, \$24.95

This is the first book to examine the success of the domestic art boom, the rapid development of its institutions and the thrilling biographies of its major players. It conveys the gold-rush atmosphere of a country making millions off the sale of contemporary art and thrusting itself into the world's cultural arena.



Wu Hung on Contemporary Chinese Artists

By Wu Hung, 278pp, Timezone8, \$50

Wu Hung, the curator and historian at University of Chicago, is the foremost writer working on contemporary Chinese art. He has produced multiple volumes on the subject over the past decade. Written in a lucid style, this new volume should appeal to both engaged and general readers.

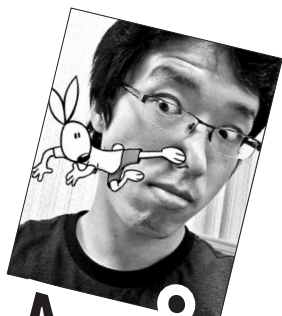


Wu Yi

By Fan Di'an, 256pp, Timezone8, \$45

Wu Yi's brushstrokes derive from his free nature. He draws Zen essence from classical painting and quietly transforms his works into a form of contemporary culture, conveying harmony and essence while forging a new link between traditional and modern art.

(By He Jianwei)

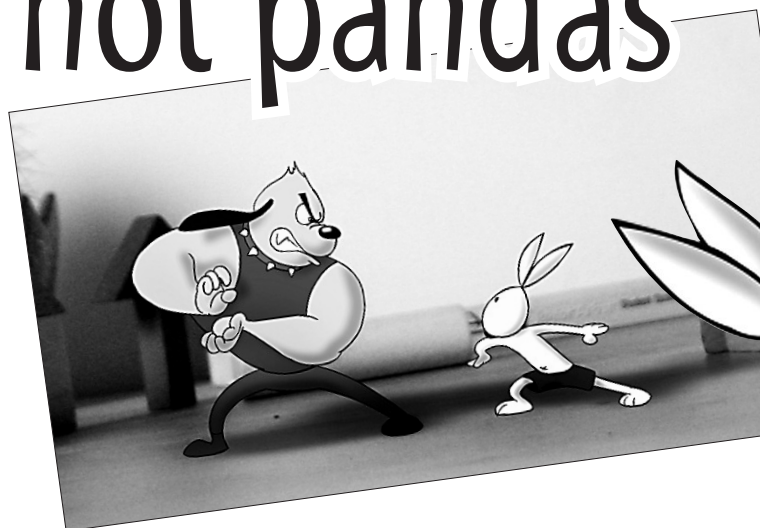


By Venus Lee

Kung Fu Bunny's Shaolin skills have won him legions of fans on the Internet. As the clicks continue, Kung Fu Bunny seems poised to become the next star toon of the Web, and may match the popularity of Bugs Bunny among local viewers.

In the shows, which combine animation and real people, Kung Fu Bunny gets enraged by his creator's cruel jokes and fights back to defend himself. The artist frequently draws in new obstacles and antagonists as they battle back and forth.

Animation may be saved by bunnies, not pandas



Kung Fu Bunny is even more stubborn, arrogant and independent than his American counterpart.

Photos provided by Li Zhiyong

Independent cartoons in infancy

Still one of the country's few independent animators, Li said there is no market for his creations.

While more and more domestic animation studios open each year, profits remain elusive. "Few can profit in this area because domestic animation lacks originality," he said. "Drawing well doesn't mean you can be a good animator. It is the just basic requirement. What will determine an animator's competitive power is a profound literary background."

The companies are also overtly commercial, so many animators lack creative freedom. "The commercialization of animation relies on its artistic value. To that end, the investors put a lot of requirements on what the animators can come up with," he said. "Time goes on, and most animators end up as tradesmen churning out new products with no inspiration."

He refused many high salary offers from companies eager to swoop up Kung Fu Bunny, and that freedom has kept his original ideas popular with netizens.

"The campus is a great place for me to experiment. Although my bunny series is independent, it can still be a commercial success: cartoon heroes and kung fu always combine to have great selling power," he said.

Li has organized his own campus team of 10 of his students. They are working to produce more cartoons out of the now legendary 40-square-meter bunny studio, which they call the "Training Room."



Emerging action star

If it can be imagined, Kung Fu Bunny is even more stubborn, arrogant and independent than his American counterpart. But Kung Fu Bunny has a weapon to back up his mischievous nature: martial arts.

When the short film first appeared online last month, the bunny immediately became a star. Many have hailed it as a sign that Chinese animators are finally coming into their own after years of being lambasted for lacking originality.

But netizens are watching more for the novel plots than for the fighting. The fights are limited to the studio of creator Li Zhiyong, and weapons include pencils, books, playing cards, bookmarks, pen bags and the sad plants that dot the darkened studio. The familiar desk environment draws viewers even closer.

"The bunny uses pencils like Bruce Lee uses nunchaku," one 28-year-old viewer said.

Li said these and other objects are so common that their use as weaponry comes off as shocking and creative to most viewers. "A lot of people wonder, 'Why didn't I ever think of that?'" he said.

The interaction between the animated rabbit and the artist is one of the show's most outstanding elements. Li said it is still fresh to most viewers, even though real people and animated characters have appeared on the same screen many times in feature films like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*?

"There are a lot of ways to do animation. But the visual effect of combining real life with cartoon takes on a more lively dimension," he said.

Not a Panda clone

Kung Fu Panda was a box office smash in North America and China last year, so of course some suspected Li's latest creation is a cheap knockoff.

But the character of Kung Fu Bunny dates back to 2005, when Li was a graduate student at Jilin University. His first film won the gold award for Academic Flash Animation at the Third China International Comic and Animation Festival that year.

"My movie doesn't rely on exaggerated facial expressions or dialogue. Most of the attempts to trick or fool the bunny are dry humor. He represents the mentality of young people: he's smart, but he's extremely stubborn," Li said.

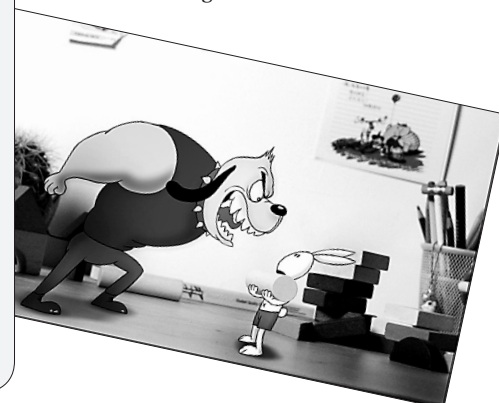
Like many other Chinese cartoon makers, he worries the young generation's dreams will be washed away in a sea of overly commercial Japanese and American cartoons. He always felt depressed when he saw many adults searching online to find foreign cartoons for their children, so he decided to try to animate on his own.

Li's formal education is in traffic and transportation engineering, but drawing has been his passion since childhood. As a boy, he filled notebooks with creative sketches.

Although he is not a trained animator, his creativity was not hindered by his lack of knowledge. He learned Adobe Flash, a vector animation program, in his spare time at school and tried to make something creative.

"My father (a carpenter) and his leftover wood, my dog and the park near my home were where I turned for creativity whenever I got bored in school," he said. "I wanted to express myself even without a formal background in painting."

This film won him a full-time teaching position at the Communication University of China's School of Animation after he was tapped by its dean after his graduation in 2007.



By Wang Yu

Gift giving does not end on Christmas Day: New Year's Day is a week away and Spring Festival is just around the corner, so we're giving you more gift ideas for friends, lovers and family.

This time of year, shops and malls everywhere are giving huge discounts to attract gift hunters. But they're still offering the usual: clothes, jewelry, wines, home decorations and electronic gadgets.

If you're looking for a present with impact, and one that won't leave a hole in your wallet, check out our recommendations below. Everything is available on ixiqi.taobao.com.

Unforgettable gifts

Amazing, endearing, funny presents for friends and family

Glow Brick

What happens when light gets trapped inside an ice brick? Glow Brick will show you.

Designed by Alvaro Catalan de Ocon for SUCK UK design house, Glow Brick features a glow-in-the-dark light bulb encased in a solid block of acrylic resin that shines like a gemstone. The brick gives out a calming, subtle glow caused by light diffracting in the tiny space between the light bulb and the resin. The space forms when the resin shrinks a little during the production process.

The glow-in-the-dark quality, or photoluminescence, is a process in which energy absorbed by a substance is released slowly in the form of light. This means you recharge Glow Brick with light from the sun: put it by your window during the day and it will give you light for at least half the night.

Manufacturers assure us a Glow Brick can last for at least 10 years. This sounds like an environmentally-friendly way to illuminate a room and give it some zing. The product is available in two colors: green and blue.

Price: 298 yuan



Momiji dolls

Momiji are Japanese message dolls: each doll has a name and a space in its base for a note for a friend or a sweetheart.

The dolls were invented three years ago in a small office in Arden, a village in Warwickshire, England, best known for its ice cream. Momiji's design team made an initial collection of 12 dolls, inspired by friendship, kindness and fond memories.

The doll's creators have since collaborated with designers from Austria, Malaysia, Australia, Chile, Thailand, Germany, Canada and Slovenia. To date, more than 20 models have been released in three collections.

Momiji dolls have become popular Christmas presents, especially among women. Some models are paired with accessories such as cups.

The dolls are not simply toys or collectibles; Momiji design and photography competitions are also held. There have even been short films inspired by the dolls. To learn more about these endearing creatures, visit lovemomiji.com.

Price: 120-140 yuan



Color-changing umbrella

Here's a gift for a friend in the south, since it's rainy there in winter.

With a design of four white clouds, this looks like any umbrella. But look again: the design is printed using special ink, so the clouds come to life when it gets wet! The ink may give off a strong, paint-like smell the first time you use the umbrella, but don't worry; the product has been tested and is safe to use.

With this "magic" umbrella, at best you will look cool; at worst you will confuse children into thinking the rainbows are leaking color.

The umbrella is 100 centimeters in diameter and comes in a variety of patterns. Children's sizes are also available.

Price: 328 yuan (comes with a free bag)



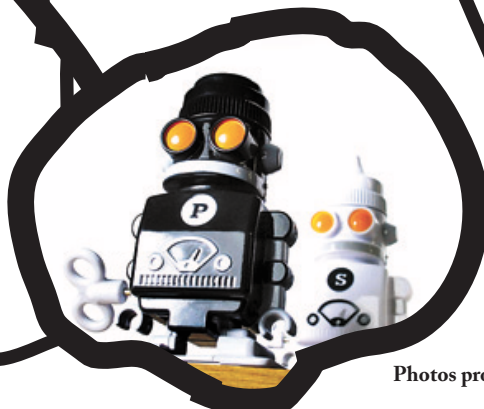
Robot salt and pepper shakers

If you think there are no Autobots and Decepticons in the world of condiments, think again.

Suck UK, a British design house and a source of many bizarre but endearing ideas, presents these black and white robot salt and pepper shakers for the holiday season.

In this age of bullet trains, online messaging and E-books, passing the salt will never be the same again: These two robot containers will waddle wherever you direct them. The next time someone says, Please pass the salt, wind up the key on robot "S" and set it on its way. The robots however have been known to slip and fall, so keep an eye on them.

Price: 258 yuan



Choken Bako

Not everyone is allowed to keep a dog at home, let alone one that guards the piggy bank.

Well, Japanese designers have solved the problem. They've created Choken Bako, a plastic dog that stands over a bowl of coins, devouring all the money in sight. Of course, the dog does not really eat the coins: when you toss some into its bowl, it immediately knocks them down a hole that lands them in the "bank."

For those who miss having an overexcited pooch and those who need help saving money, this one is for you.

Tips to keep your dog healthy:

1. Do not be stingy with your pet. It will not be interested in a single coin; one coin is not heavy enough to activate the dog's weight-sensitive mechanism that directs it to bank your money.

2. On the other hand, do not give it too much money either. Too many coins will plug up the hole.

3. Choken Bako comes in three colors: black, white and brown. It runs on two AA batteries, which are not included in the package.

Price: 295 yuan



Photos provided by google.cn

Indulging at Gongti

New Chinese restaurants by the Workers' Stadium

By Annie Wei

The Workers' Stadium food and entertainment scene seems to have something for everyone: inexpensive food stalls during daytime that the elderly love, fine dining restaurants for folks who want a meal with an equally good view and trendy clubs for late night partiers.

This month, the area gained a number of new dining options, opening just in time to take advantage of the holiday dining spree. Among them were some Chinese restaurants that offer good food for better prices.



Baked pigeon with salt and pepper, 38 yuan

Photos by Huang Xiao



Chongqing hotpot

Photo by Huang Xiao

The lord of real Chongqing hot pot

What would Chongqing be without hot pot? Locals believe hot pot protects their body from the cold during the city's humid yet freezing winter.

Chongqing Yangjia Hot Pot, housed in an old two-story building on a small alley off Xingfu Zhong Lu, is the newest "it" place among Sichuan and Chongqing natives in Beijing. They say it kicks the ass of every Chongqing hot pot restaurant along Guijie, a popular food street along Dongzhimen Wai Avenue.

Many people think spiciness equals Chongqing hot pot, when it is in fact its fragrance that makes it unique. Authentic Chongqing hot pot should not burn the tongue; it should give joy to the nose, natives say.

We recommend throwing in lamb, tripe, fresh duck blood and xiangcai wanzi. The last is smashed cilantro pork ball, which is prepared by mixing pork with ginger, Chinese cooking wine, salt and egg. It's a popular hot pot dish in Chongqing, but it is seldom offered in Beijing.

Chongqing Yangjia gives equal respect to its host city: it also serves Beijing hot pot, often ordered with sesame paste as a dipping sauce.

For Chongqing hot pot, sesame oil works best as sauce. For a truly Chongqing flair, add cilantro, garlic puree and a bit of oyster sauce to the oil.

Those who love their hot pot spicy should do well to ask for the restaurant's complimentary homemade soy milk.

The best thing about Chongqing Yangjia is its affordability, even after location has been factored in. A hot pot with three servings of lamb, three types of vegetables, noodles and dessert should run up a bill of about 120 yuan. Many plates can be ordered half a serving.

Chongqing Yangjia Huoguo

Where: Xingfucun Zhong Lu
Tel: 6415 8833
Open: 11 am – 10 pm



Pork lachang, 18 yuan

Hong Kong favorites round-the-clock

Chef Gallery 1, a 24-hour restaurant, serves Hong Kong cuisine and creative fusion dishes, including everyone's favorite dim sum.

It has an overtly southern selection of food, which favors fowl like pigeon or chicken rather than the pork, beef and lamb preferred by northerners. Southerners consider fowl more nutritious – particularly pigeon, known for its juicy and tender meat.

It's no surprise then that the restaurant specializes in baked pigeon with salt and pepper – regularly 38 yuan, but now on sale for 18 yuan. The salt and pepper have seeped into the meat, making this a simple but lip-smacking course.

We also recommend Hong Kong-style barbecues such as crispy suckling pig (68 yuan), marinated chicken with spring onion (78 yuan), roast duck (68 yuan for half an order), honey-glazed barbecue pork (38 yuan), soya roast chicken (80 yuan) and roast barbecue mixed-meat platter (58 yuan) with chicken, pork belly and goose meat.

People who adore Guangdong-style herbal soups will love this restaurant: it makes wild mushroom soup (48 yuan), stewed chicken with herbs (38 yuan), sea coconut with papaya and pork soup (28 yuan) and double-boiled chicken soup with ginseng (28 yuan).

Better stop by now while the place is relatively quiet.

Chef Gallery 1

Where: Inside the north gate of the Workers' Stadium (first stand), Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 24 hours
Tel: 6551 1366

Tianjin dishes with a big name

A building across Yashow Market that features a theater, a boutique for traditional apparel and a restaurant threw open its doors for the first time in the early December. Local celebrities were spotted at the grand opening, including Guo Degang, a cross-talk performer and owner of the building's restaurant, Guojiacai.

Guo said that aside from comedy, all cross-talk performers love good food. Over the years, he said he has collected various recipes, particularly those of Tianjin and Shandong, which he learned to perfect at home.

At Guojiacai, diners can start with cold dishes like xianyanan banlao tofu (18 yuan), tofu with salted duck egg, or shenhai zhetou (38 yuan), jellyfish prepared with vinegar, ginger and salt.

For a main course, try Tianjin favorites like zhadaiyu xiao juanzi (48 yuan), deep-fried ribbon fish with twisted steamed bread, or jiucai daxia (68 yuan), fried leeks with shrimps. Since Tianjin is located by the sea, its food teems with fresh seafood.

A waitress also recommended

we try guojia shuai wanzi (58 yuan), stewed pork meatball in home-made broth.

The restaurant's service was good, but the dishes were a bit expensive for Tianjin standards – a city that made it on the food map for its street snacks and generous restaurant servings.

Tianjin guotie, or fried dumpling, available at vegetable and meat markets and street stalls for 4 yuan goes for 20 yuan a serving at Guojiacai. But hey, this is Sanlitun and rent here is not cheap.

The clothing boutique next to the restaurant is overpriced, as expected. But one thing visitors can look forward to are the nightly live performances on the second floor teahouse. There you'll find the second branch of Deyunshe, famous for its comedy shows and satirical dialogues. Audiences enjoy the show while drinking tea and snacking on sunflower seeds, like their forefathers did in another age.

Guojiacai

Where: Across Yashow Market, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am – 10 pm



Inside Guojiacai restaurant

CFP Photo

'Animamix' brings together high and low art



Photo provided by Today Art Museum

By He Jianwei

Victoria Lu is one grandmother who not only loves animation but also looks like an anime character with her fringed, flaming red hair. The Taiwanese art curator and critic is responsible for coining the term "animamix" to describe the marriage of animation and comics – a trend she saw emerge in the exhibit Fiction Love at Taipei's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in 2004 and in its sequel at Shanghai's MOCA in 2006.

The following year, the first Animamix Biennale was held at the MOCA in Shanghai, where Lu serves as creative director. The second Biennale will open Sunday in four locations and run for two weeks at MOCA Taipei, MOCA Shanghai, Today Art Museum in Beijing and Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou.

Animamix, which has its roots in the abstract art of the early 20th century, is compatible with the storytelling

approach of our digital age as it uses pictorial language to communicate ideas, Lu said.

The style is not limited to visual art; animamix-inspired products have permeated industries such as IT, food, clothing, home decor and transportation. "This type of artistic creation is in perfect harmony with popular culture. In this new era, the division between high art and low art no longer exists," said Lu, a professor of fashion and media design at Shih-Chien University in Taipei.

Enliven – In Between Realities and Fiction

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 27 – January 10, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

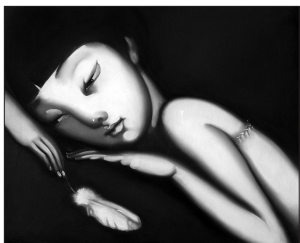
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804

5 Friday, December 25

Exhibition

Design in China

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 18, 2010, daily, 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 5876 0600



Material World – He Zubin's Oil Painting Exhibition

Where: New Millennium Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 20, 2010, daily except Monday, 10

am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 4122

Movie

7 Zwerge (7 Dwarfs)

Where: Blue Bud Cafe, 3 Guowang Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8404 5129

Nightlife

Gifts for You

Where: Wild Strawberry Cafe, 52 Houhai Nanyan, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan (Bring a gift for exchange)
Tel: 8328 4250

Me Too Band

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 4611

6 Saturday, December 26

Exhibition

Life is Tough

– A Photography Exhibition

Where: Source, Suite E128, World City High Street, 8-9 Jinhui Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31, daily, 11 am – 10 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8590 7872

One Day

Where: The Shop, Room 1503, B1 Building 15, West Area, Jianwai SOHO, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday, 1-7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5900 4374

Movie

Heading to the North

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 4:30 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

Farewell, Beijing

Where: 4/F Wenjin Hotel, 1 Zhongguancun Dong Lu, Haidian District

When: 4:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6252 5566 ext. 5398

Nightlife

Early Bus and Skarving

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 4611

Haoyun's Ballad Concert

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080



7 Sunday, December 27

Exhibition

Story – Wang Sheng Solo Exhibition

Where: Borui Gallery, Room 1-28, Building C, Yuanyang Guanghua Guoji, Jintong Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 22, 2010, daily, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 13121861727

Recuerdos de Espana

Where: Instituto Cervantes, 1A Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28,

daily, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5879 9666

Angel in City – Xiong Yu Solo Exhibition

Where: PIFO New Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 10, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9562

Movie

The Vagina Monologues

Where: Cherry Cafe, Mao'er Hutong, Nan Luoguxiang,

Dongcheng District

When: 5:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 15801672438

Nightlife

Mystery – A Middle East Tambourine and Belly Dancing Group Performance

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8402 8477

Zhou Yunpeng's Concert

Where: D-22 bar, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan, 40 yuan for students
Tel: 6264 3177



Angel in City at PIFO Art Gallery

Upcoming

Exhibition

Peng Wei at the Opposite House

Where: The Opposite House Atrium, The Village, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January – March 2010, daily, 24 hours
Admission: Free
Tel: 6536 0601

Stage in January

Concert

The Mozart Symphony Orchestra of London New Year Concert

Where: Haidian Theater, 84 Huangzhuang Lu, Haidian District
When: January 1, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-1,680 yuan
Tel: 8253 3588

The Vienna Johann Strauss Orchestra New Year Concert

Where: Century Theater, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: January 1, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-880 yuan
Tel: 6466 3015

Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 4, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-800 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

The Blue Danube – Youth Chamber Philharmonic NRW of Germany

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District
When: January 10, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-580 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Berlin Philharmonic String Quartet

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: January 13-14, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Merry Widow – China Philharmonic Orchestra 2009-2010 Season

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 22-24, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Dance

Carmen

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: January 1-2, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Sovereign's Night by the China Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 26-31, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,000 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

Clean kids may grow up sick adults

By Han Manman

Freaking out when the little ones play in the mud or eat food off the floor may be doing more harm than good according to a new study.

Proper exposure to germs during youth is instrumental to the development of a strong immune system as an adult: one that can protect against allergies and heart disease later in life.

New reasons for filth to be fun

Children who grow up in squeaky clean environments may have a higher risk of infections as they age, as well as an increased vulnerability to heart diseases, according to a study released by Northwestern University's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and the Institute for Policy Research early this month.

The current trend of abusing hand sanitizers, exacerbated by swine flu, could make things worse for the next generation.

"Contrary to assumptions from earlier studies, our research suggests that ultra-clean, ultra-hygienic environments early in life may contribute to higher levels of illness as an adult, which in turn increases risks for a wide range of diseases," Thomas McDade, lead author of the study, said.

"In the US, we have this idea that we need to protect infants and children from microbes and pathogens at all possible costs," McDade said.

"But we may be depriving developing immune networks of important environmental input needed to guide their function throughout childhood and into adulthood," he said.

Researchers examined data from a study in the Philippines, which followed participants from birth to 22 years of age. The data was compiled by tracking children born in the 1980s to 3,327 Filipino mothers.

Researchers visited the children every two months for the first two years of their lives and then spaced out the visits to every four or five years until the children reached their 20s.

Among items the researchers assessed was the hygiene of the household environment—

—"whether domestic animals such as pigs and dogs roamed freely"— and the family's socioeconomic resources.

Findings suggest early exposure to infectious microbes may protect individuals from cardiovascular diseases that can lead to death as an adult.

It also suggests that immune systems may need a higher level of exposure to common everyday bacteria and microbes to guide their development.

Of course, that is not to suggest the road to health is paved with manure, McDade said.

Chinese medicine supports findings

Wang Nianrong, a doctor from Beijing Woman's and Children's Health Care Hospital, said her hospital has been seeing more and more children sick from "excessive care and cleanness," especially urban children.

Wang said one three-year-old boy she saw weeks ago had an "odd ailment." Whenever he goes to kindergarten, he ends up with a cold, fever, diarrhea or a skin infection.

However, he recovers rapidly as soon as he returns home.

After examination, the doctor found the boy's mother was obsessed with cleanliness and the boy had never been exposed to a natural environment.

Wang said the mother worried too much, even ordering babysitters to "change the boy's clothes every day, never ever allow him to touch dirty things like mud or wood and wash his hands immediately after touching anything."

"The boy has a very weak immune system due to living too long in a clean environment," Wang said.

Wang said the best way to build the immune system is to let children experience nature.

A person's ability to fight off diseases can only be developed gradually over repeated exposures.

She said children who live around dirt, plants and germs and even some viruses will gradually adapt. The latest findings have won support from some parents.

"I am sick and tired of being told you are a bad parent if you let your children get dirty," a father named Yuan Dong said.

He said his friends always pressure him to keep his 6-year-old son from playing in the mud or climbing trees.

"When my friends saw me ask my kid to pick up food that falls on the table, they all complain I care too little about hygiene," Yuan said.

"In fact, my kid seldom gets a cold and he is very fit and healthy with no allergies to anything. And we only use normal soap and water. Not like my friends who use expensive antibacterial products," he said.

CFP Photo

Tips for raising a healthy child

1. Do not stop your kids from playing outdoors or scold them for getting dirty.

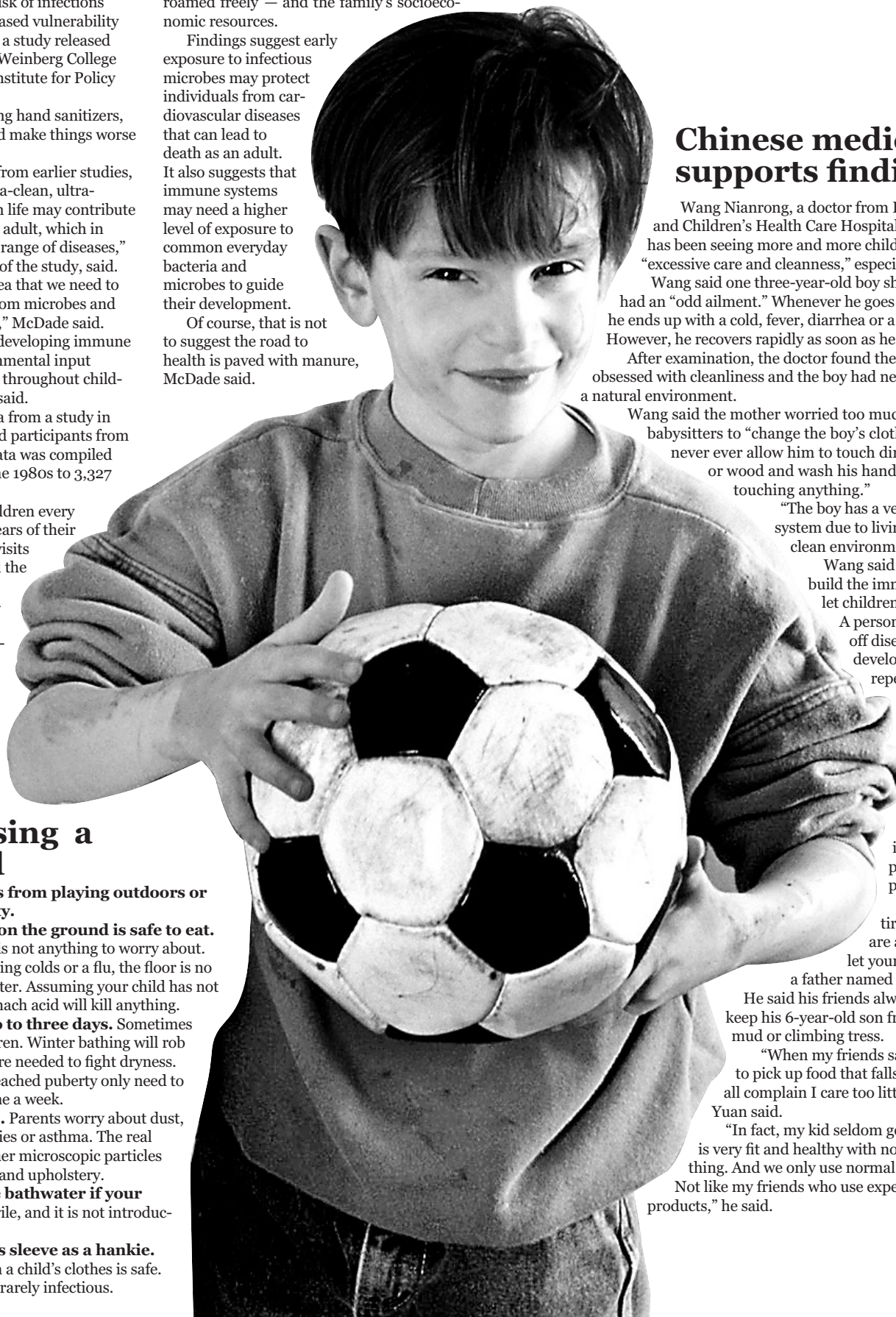
2. Food that has fallen on the ground is safe to eat. Brief contact with the ground is not anything to worry about. In fact, when it comes to catching colds or a flu, the floor is no riskier than a tabletop or counter. Assuming your child has not ingested serious bacteria, stomach acid will kill anything.

3. Only bathe every two to three days. Sometimes parents over-bathe their children. Winter bathing will rob the skin of essential oils that are needed to fight dryness. Most children who have not reached puberty only need to bathe or wash two or three times a week.

4. Let the dust build up. Parents worry about dust, but it is not what causes allergies or asthma. The real culprits are dust mites and other microscopic particles that settle in carpets, bedding and upholstery.

5. Do not throw out the bathwater if your child pees in it. Urine is sterile, and it is not introducing any new germs.

6. Let your child use his sleeve as a hankie. That dried-on, crusted stuff on a child's clothes is safe. Secretions that have dried are rarely infectious.



Creative resurrection

Attractions at the former Beijing Electric Wire and Cable Factory

By Zhang Dongya

The former Beijing Electric Wire and Cable Factory is located on Jianguo Road. The gate to the complex still bears the factory's name beside a sign that reads "Cable 8 Culture Creative Center."

In Cable 8, the old factories have become home to a variety of businesses, including art galleries, design offices, photography studios, advertising agencies and clothing shops. Last month, the Beijing International Cultural and Creative Industry Expo (ICCIIE) added the center to its list of industrial tourism sites.

With more than 160 lessees, Cable 8 has much to offer sight-seers, but the offices of famous artists usually require an appointment. This week, *Beijing Today* introduces to you four of the center's main attractions.



Cable 8 Culture Creative Center juxtaposes old and new designs.



A bathing house for factory workers used to stand in Yishu 8's current location.



ZNA has redecorated its office for the Christmas season.

The factory complex, built in 1958, began its transformation into a culture and creative center two years ago. Eight of its 20 buildings were redecorated, but their architecture – typical of China's industrial buildings of the 1950s to '70s – was left untouched.

The juxtaposition of old and new elements aims to raise greater awareness of the ties between the country's recent past and its present prosperity. Tours are also expected to attract more companies to set up shop at Cable 8.

Architecture and local culture

ZNA is a Boston-based architecture, planning and urban and interior design firm. It branched out to China in 2007 and opened its second domestic office at Cable 8 last year.

Its office, located on the third floor of Factory Building A, features photography exhibitions. Besides photographs about the firm's 60-year history, there are also ones showing the architectural and fashion trends from the 1950s and onwards. The images fill corridor walls and extend to the employees' office. Most of the pictures were taken in the Middle East, where ZNA's projects have been concentrated.

There are also miniatures of the firm's best known and award-winning architectural designs, such as American University in Cairo, which was completed recently.

ZNA's first China project was the Haxi District Development Office, the governor's building in Harbin, completed last year. It reinvented the design for government office buildings in the country: the building incorporates curves instead of the more traditional squares. Local media called it "more accessible and more people-friendly." The design has since been imitated in other Chinese cities.

One ongoing ZNA project, expected to be finished in 2012, is the seven-star hotel Haitang Bay – Mangrove Tree Fairmont Resort in Sanya, Hainan Province. It will be the country's first seven-star hotel, akin to Dubai's famed Burj Al Arab.

ZNA says it strives to integrate elements of local culture in its designs. The Prophecy, a museum in Kuwait, incorporates the values of Islam in its design: its axis is pointing toward Mecca, the Muslim holy land.

The firm's corporate culture is apparent in its office's setup: sharing space with architecture books and meeting rooms are sculptures, a drum kit and ping-pong tables.

ZNA

Where: Room D307, Building 6, Cable 8 Creative Culture Center, Liangjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9:30 am – 6:30 pm

Tel: 6583 3057



ZNA is known for its architectural designs that incorporate elements of local culture.



+86 sells creative products made by domestic and international designers.

Continued on page 21...

Photos by Jason Wang

... continued from page 20



Toilet paper holder-cum-puzzle available at +86 guarantees to kill boredom.



+86's merchandise includes award-winning local products.



Julia's Spring and Summer 2010 collection on display in its Beijing shop.



Yishu 8 regularly hosts lectures and art exhibitions.



Chinese painter Jiang Dahai's solo exhibition is on display at Yishu 8 until January 7.

China-Europe art center

Yishu 8 is a venue for lectures and art exhibitions.

Its main exhibition hall is hosting painter Jiang Dahai's solo exhibition, "The Sound of Waves," until January 7 next year. The room, which can fit 100 people, doubles as a lecture hall.

An upcoming lecture, on February 7, 2010, is "Next Meeting: Monet," an art talk for children age 10 and up.

Most of the lectures, given by foreign professors and experts, including French writer Christine Cayol, co-founder of Yishu 8, are free of charge.

Outside the building is a small yard, which used to contain a bathing house for factory workers. Now, grapes grow in the yard beside a big old tree.

Yishu 8

Where: Building F, Cable 8 Creative Culture Center, Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 6:30 pm

Tel: 6581 9078

Wedding dresses and photography

Popular figures in the entertainment and business world head to Julia for their wedding dresses and photos.

The company, founded in Taipei and with a branch in Singapore, is famed for its handmade wedding gowns. It also makes handmade gloves and bridal accessories. Tailoring services for the groom and the male entourage are available too.

Julia's Taipei headquarters employs eight wedding photographers to provide clients its Capture Love Around the World service – wedding photography shoots in domestic and overseas locations, including Bali and the Maldives.

On display at its eight-month-old Beijing boutique are its Spring and Summer 2010 collection. Some of the gowns are for sale; others for rent.

Consultations are by appointment, and the office only accepts one appointment a day. Celebrities choose Julia because it assures them not only of top quality service, but more importantly of privacy.

Julia

Where: Room D101, Building 6, Cable 8 Creative Culture Center, Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 12-9 pm

Tel: 5208 3997

Selling creativity

One of Culture 8's newest tenants is +86, a shop for creative products that opened last month. Its merchandise includes household goods, fashion accessories and gift items from popular domestic and international brands, including Italy's Alessi and London's Suck UK.

Among the shop's hit products is the Japanese-designed cup ring (198 yuan), a cup with a crystal-inlaid handle.

Aside from doing retail business, +86 is also involved in programs to train and build up Chinese designers.

+86

Where: Room 115, Building A, Cable 8 Creative Culture Center, Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 7:30 pm

Tel: 5208 3886



Julia's wedding gowns are popular among celebrities.
Photos by Jason Wang

Cable 8 Creative Culture Center

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Dawanglu station, then head west for 200 meters

Tel: 6581 3456

Next issue, we will feature more tourist attractions included on the ICCIE's list.

Dining



Energetic lunch buffet

Stay energetic through the busy work day with a great lunch at Bloo Dining. Choose from a variety of items like healthy grains, traditional noodles, vegetables and desserts. It is a nutritious culinary experience not to be missed.

Where: Bloo Dining, Park Plaza Beijing Wangfujing, 97 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

When: Monday – Friday, 11:30 am – 2 pm

Cost: 108 yuan for two (special winter offer), includes two health drinks, add 15 yuan for free drinks; 108 yuan for one (normal price)

Tel: 8522 1999 ext. 3623

Lobby Lounge

Celebrate, relax and share in the festive cheer with a selection of Christmas cocktails. All-you-can-indulge MUM champagne will be served with smoked salmon, caviar and canapés in the Lobby Lounge.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

When: December 24, 25, 31, 6 pm – 1 am next day

Cost: 158 yuan

Tel: 5993 8888

CBD festive buffet specialties

CBD has festive specialties like roast turkeys with stuffing and cranberry sauce, bread and butter pudding, honey-glazed ham,

brandy fruitcakes and its existing gourmet buffet.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 30

Cost: 166 yuan net (lunch), 216 yuan net (dinner); not applicable on Christmas Eve dinner, Christmas Day and Sunday Brunch

Tel: 6530 9383

Spa

Winter Essential

Indulge in a Rejuvenating Warm Oil Massage and Nourishing Facial (100 minutes) to repel the dryness and cold.

Where: Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 10 am – 11 pm

Cost: 680 yuan (35 percent off normal rate of 1,060 yuan), subject to 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8560

Tourism

Greek Christmas lighting

On the evening of December 11, the Constitution Square Christmas Tree-lighting ceremony was held. With live music and fireworks, the people of Athens got into the spirit of Christmas as they surrounded the giant tree to wait for the countdown.

The theme is environmental protection, so this year's giant tree in Constitution Square is composed of 250 smaller pine trees. The government will plant the trees throughout Athens in areas afflicted by summer forest fires to help protect the Earth.



Aviation

First foreign carrier to fly to Shantou

Low fares leader Jetstar will launch first time services from Singapore to Shantou, Guangdong Province, from February 2, 2010. Jetstar will operate the new route as a three-times weekly A320 return service between Shantou Waisha Airport and

Singapore Changi Airport with plans to expand the service.

New Air France Premium Voyageur Destinations

Air France customers can now book seats in the Premium Voyageur cabin on flights to Beirut and Sin-

gapore starting December 28 and to Beijing and Hong Kong starting January 18, 2010.

Round trips between Paris and Beirut are €1,179 including tax; Paris and Singapore €1,456; Paris and Beijing €1,652; Paris and Hong Kong €1,657; Paris and New York €1,038; Paris and Tokyo €1,658.



Garuda Indonesia Beijing routes change

In order to provide careful and convenient service, flights departing from Beijing will be changed to Airbus 330-200 starting January 12, 2010. Garuda Indonesia will begin offering monthly promotion for its regular passengers next year.

Hotel



Regent Beijing makes world's best hotels list

The Regent Beijing was voted one of the World's Best Business Hotels at the 2009 World's Best Awards by *Travel + Leisure* magazine. The award is the latest in a slew of accolades won by the hotel. The Regent blends classic elegance with contemporary comfort for the discerning traveller and guest.

Cross-talker visits Gloria Plaza Hotel

Jiang Kun, a renowned cross-talker, recently visited the Gloria Plaza Hotel Beijing. He was welcomed by Francis Ong, director of Food & Beverage, upon his arrival.

New executive chef at Park Plaza

Chef Matthew Van Der Zwan is the new executive chef at Park Plaza Beijing West. His extensive culinary background includes the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. His stated goal is to create a modern, stylish and enjoyable dining experience at the Park Plaza Beijing West – one which combines his culinary skills with the distinctive design of the restaurant in the hotel, located at Wukesong Business Circle.

Shangri-La's Far Eastern Plaza Hotel, Taipei

Readers of *Travel + Leisure* ranked Shangri-La's Far Eastern Plaza Hotel, Taipei as the number two business hotel in the world, enabling the hotel to write a new page in the history of the Taiwanese hospitality industry. This is the highest honor ever given to a Taiwanese hotel.

Charity

Photo party raises charity for migrant kids

Compassion for Migrant Children hosted a party to draw awareness to International Migrants Day. "Twas the last Chuan'r before Christmas," sponsored by Marriott Beijing hotels, was held at the New Cultural Art Center in 798 Art District last Friday. It was a dynamic night of cool people, great photos, chill live music, savory chuan'r, drinks and Christmas cheer. All photo sales went to Compassion, which operates migrant community centers in Beijing and Shanghai.

(By Sun Feng)

Event

Pole-dancing competition

A night of Upbeat House music mixed by resident Zeta DJ Florian. Come see sexy pole dancers battle it out for the city's pole-dancing crown and top cash prizes.

Where: Zeta Bar, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 30, 9 pm onward

Cost: 120 yuan for three beers from Zeta Bar's wine and cocktail selection

Tel: 5865 5040

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

A night of music and breaking necks

By Wang Yu

When my American friend Chris and I arrived in Ice's apartment one warm autumn afternoon, Ice was in his bedroom busy tinkering with various musical instruments. His computer screen showed he was recording a complicated piece.

Ice chose his English name in the hope of appearing cool and mysterious, but it just made him sound either like a primary school student with a bad case of comic-book hero worship or a drug addict hip-hop artist who gets a buzz from street shootouts. Despite his strange name, Ice was a serious musician, a guitarist and a song writer.

Chris and I dropped by to help Ice with his recording. Chris would play the bass guitar, while I was going to do the vocals and keyboard.

Ice lives alone in an ordinary-looking apartment his parents bought him years ago; Chinese parents have been spooked by the rapid rise in housing prices and are eager to solve their only child's problems.

"Will you break your neck to buy a house?" Chris had asked me on our way to Ice's.

I was confused by his question until he explained "break one's neck" meant to "make a great effort" or "try very hard" to do something.

Ice's living room had no TV; it only had a stereo system and posters of rock pioneers such as The Beatles and The Kinks. His bedroom doubled as a sound-proof recording studio with musical instruments lying everywhere. Chris and I sat on the bed as Ice played an unfinished love song. The drum beats were slow, the acoustic guitar took the melody and the electric guitar and piano faded in and out. It was a sad song, filled

with the passion of someone who was trying to win back his lover.

"Who was this song made for? Penny?" I asked, referring to his girlfriend.

"Yeah," Ice said. He looked tired, like he hadn't slept for days.

"Ah, you guys had another fight?" Chris said. We knew Ice and Penny loved each a lot, but they also fought constantly.

"Yeah, she brought up the subject of marriage, but I said now is not the time. I'm not ready yet, you know."

"Of course, of course, we understand, man. It's not a big deal. All you need is to talk," Chris said.

"You don't have anyone else do you?" I asked.

"Leave before I ask again, OK?" Ice said,

but he knew I was joking.

"But you still need a vocalist."

"Then we should begin, now!"

The day's recording was exhausting. Ice wanted everything to be perfect, so we kept playing again and again. At midnight, Chris and I suggested getting something to eat.

"I know you're gonna break your neck to finish this, but relax, it will be done and Penny will come back," I said.

"I know, but the computer's been experiencing problems and I don't want to stick out my neck for food before we finish this," Ice said.

"Er, I also don't want to risk going out if the computer's not working right," Chris said.

I was clearly outvoted, but at least Ice sounded better – a sign that he was feeling better.

CFP Photo

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

The song is strange

By Tiffany Tan

Christmas seems to be the season for homonyms. Last week we had tartar sauce, which was translated into *taimai zhi*, and which to our horror and embarrassment ended up becoming "his wife juice."

Now, we have a supermarket (sorry, Ito Yokado!) with an identity problem. How else can you explain a musical commentary in the middle of the biscuit and pie section?

In the Chinglish world, nothing is impossible or inexplicable. Above "the song is strange" are the Chinese words

quqi. Qu often appears in the word *gequ*, or song, while *qi*, as any elementary Chinese language student will tell you, means strange. Hence, you have the unfavorable comment about someone's music.

But *quqi* actually means "cookies." The Chinese translation was derived from characters that sound similar to the English word. You see, what a twisted matter!

Anyway, as long as you get your goodies and the right music for Christmas, then all's well that ends well. Merry Christmas!



Quqi should be translated into cookies.

Photo by Tiffany

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. We have fields to offset some needs, like raise chicken for eggs.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): "Like" originally serves as a conjunction in oral and informal speech. In spoken or informal English, "like" is often used instead of "as" or "as if" to introduce clauses of comparison. It is now increasingly accepted in written language. We can now see such newspaper headlines as "Nobody loves like Mama does." People now rightly say: It rained like the skies were falling. Or: It sounds to me like they don't know what is going on either. The problem with the example cited here is that "like" in the sense of "as" has to be followed by an independent clause or a noun clause. In this case, it should be: We have fields to offset some needs, like raising chicken for eggs.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS):

Some grammarians will split hairs will say that "like" excludes the examples following it, whereas "such as" includes them. They would say that the above example makes it clear the owners of these fields offset needs by doing things like raising chickens for eggs, but they do not actually raise chickens. However, most readers who have had a bowel movement in the last month will assume these terms are interchangeable.

2. Infants under six months old are at very high risk of sustaining the swine flu.

ZS: "Six months old" is an attributive. In formal English, it should be: Infants under six months of age, or infants under the age of six months. However, it is being increasingly used as a noun form in formal written English. It is perfectly right to say: People under 20 years old, instead of "People under the age of 20 years." You have other ways to express this idea. People at the age of 20; or, people aged 20. You may say for simplicity: people age 20, actually it means: people at the age of 20. The 20 years olds are chasing one fashion after another. In this case, "the 20 years olds" serves as a collective noun.

SS: While it may be correct usage, "aged 20" sounds more suitable for describing fine wines than humans. I would much prefer to read someone "under age 20" than "aged fewer than 20 years." Though to raise another point, the use of "under" is a little problematic. Under and over as best reserved to describe spatial relationships. One could instead say "infants younger than six months" or "persons older than 60," which would negate the need for a final "old" or "of age," since these words make it clear the numerical reference is to time.

3. The government's commitment to combat climate change

ZS: "To commit" is to pledge, to bind or involve oneself. So, "commitment" is a pledge or promise. We say: We are committed to what we have promised. We are committed to reorganizing our forces. "To be committed to" is to be followed by a noun, a noun clause or a participle phrase. So, please remember it is so with "commitment" too. For an example, We shall honor our commitments. We shall honor our commitments to combating climate change. So, what is wrong with the sample sentence lies with the usage of "combat." It should be: The government's commitment to combating climate change. Here you will have to use the participle phrase instead of the infinitive. I have another example for you: He commits himself to working for environment protection throughout his lifetime.

SS: I think the professor's answer is more than adequate. Assuming this is not a fragment, "the government's commitment to combating climate change" is the best correction.

Bad Lieutenant: (2009)

Port of Call New Orleans



Movie of the week

Werner Herzog's latest *Bad Lieutenant* is a nice shot at black comedy.

The label was imposed by producer Edward Pressman in the hopes of building a future franchise. But Herzog said his Port of Call New Orleans subtitle would serve as a better franchise launch point. The combined title was a compromise. One thing you can always count on in any Herzog movie is a strange story bent around one bizarre individual. The film bears a strong resemblance to the thematically surreal and contrived nature of a Coen Brothers film, but this one is more character driven. More specifically, this film was designed to live or die with Nicholas Cage's performance. In this case, that might not be a bad thing.

Synopsis

Terence McDonagh (Nicholas Cage) is a rogue detective – playing fast and loose with the law – who is as devoted to his job as he is at using both badge and gun to score drugs and get his way. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina he becomes a high-functioning addict who is a deeply intuitive, fearless detective reigning over the ruins of New Orleans with authority and abandon. Complicating his tumultuous life is the prostitute he loves, Frankie Donnenfeld (Eva Mendes). Together they descend into their own world marked by desire, compulsion and conscience. The result is a masterpiece of filmmaking: equally sad and manically humorous.



Scene 1

(After Hurricane Katrina, Terence McDonagh and his partner Stevie Pruitt return to the police office where they find a suspect still locked up.)

Terence McDonagh (T): Duffy split (1).

Stevie Pruitt (S): Yeah. Freaking Duffy, Cavanaugh, Tyrell. Duffy rolls out of here (2) in a brand new Cadillac up the lot, has the nerve to ask me to clean up his f--king locker and save it for him.

T: Probably has dirty pictures of his wife.

S: I don't know what the f--k's in here He does have dirty pictures of his wife.

T: Yes, he does.

S: Lucky man ... her hooters (3).

T: You like that, huh? Alright, here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna keep them.

S: Now, I gotta answer to Duffy for that.

T: I'll answer to him.

S: It means that Duffy's been marked a bad guy.

T: F--k Duffy! Just f--k him! F--k all of them! Five copies of an arrest report. The prisoner was transported. There wouldn't still be five copies here. Duffy might have left them downstairs. What's his name? Chavez. Let's go find him.

Scene 2

(Police officers enter the jail.)

S: That's strange, 'cause the manifest says the prisoners all evacuated.

T: Anything is possible in this storm.

Chavez (C): Who's there?

T: I feel a bet coming on. Should we open the casino (4)? Alright, up to his nose by 4 o'clock.

C: What took you so long, man? Please.

T: Please, what?

C: Get me the f--k out of here, man. The water's rising. It's been risin' for like three hours, man. It's already up to my neck. I'm not gonna be able to f--kin' stand here long, man. I'm gonna f--kin' drown, man. The water doesn't stop, man. It keeps rising and shit, man. Get me the f--k out of here. There's f--kin' snakes and shit in this water, bro. Get me out.

S: Alright, twenty bucks and the Polaroid says nothing happens before 5.

T: Twenty bucks. What is that? Let's make it worth our while, at least. A dime.

S: I'm not betting you no thousand dollars.

C: Get me the f--k out of here, man. The water keeps rising, man. Get me the f--k out of here!

S: Alright, 200 and the polaroids.

C: Please, motherf--kers. Please!

T: Please, what? Shit turd.

C: I got a broken leg, Sir. Please get me out of here.

T: Wait a minute. You want me to get wet on account of (5) you?

C: Hey man, I'm drowning, Sir.

T: Hey, man. I got on Swiss cotton underpants. Yeah, that's right. Cost me 55 dollars a pair. You think I wanna get all this brown water and shit all over 'em? That don't come out.

S: You got underwear on that costs 55 dollars?

T: My girl gave it to me.

[Chavez praying]

S: Come on, we'll get the time of death from the autopsy.



Scene 3

(Terence saves the prisoner and hurts his back. The act of bravery wins him a promotion. With the storm passed, a family lays murdered and Terence is sent to investigate.)

The Police (P): You up to (6) this?

T: Why wouldn't I be?

P: I know you still have problems with your back. You're dealing with being in pain a lot of the time.

T: I'm managing.

P: You still taking medication for it?

T: Only what the doctor prescribes.

P: Ordinarily we'd let it be somebody with more time on the job handling this kind of investigation. But I'm gonna go out on a limb (7) with you because you got good instincts and don't do nothing but work. But if I find out that you needed help you didn't ask for, I'm gonna be mad.

T: Yes, Sir.

Vocabulary

- split:** to run away
- roll out of here:** to leave by way of car
- hooters:** crass slang for a woman's breasts
- open the casino:** to make a friendly wager
- on account of:** because of
- to be up to:** here it means to be ready for
- go out on a limb:** to take a risk

(By Wang Yu)